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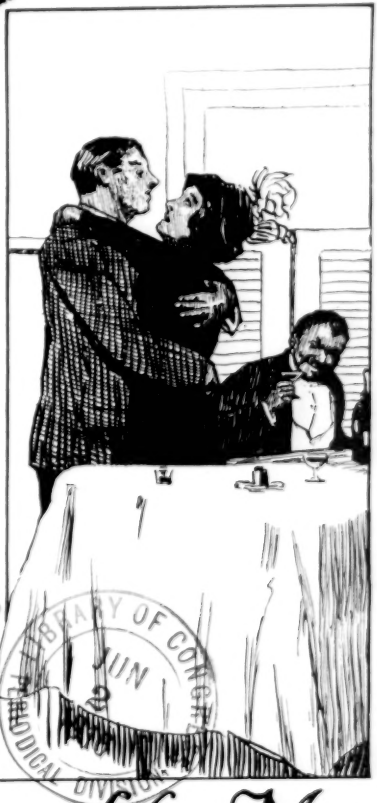
A Short Story Magazine

June, 1916 Ten Cents



The Helping Hand of Hogan

by Francis W Dever

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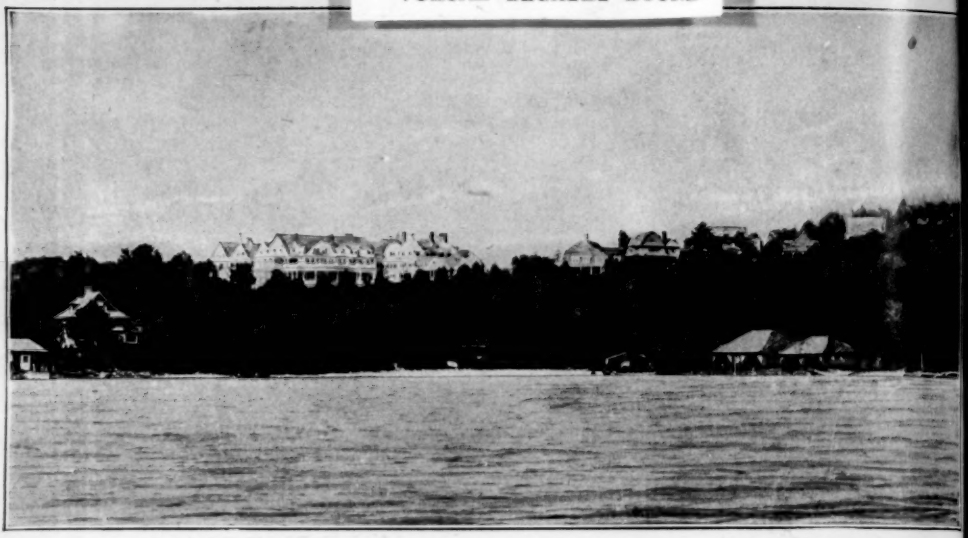

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The Black Cat

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Contents

The Helping Hand of Hogan	*Francis W. Dever*	1
Billy Crayden—Outlaw	*Harold de Polo*	7
The Jasmine Flower	*Florence Briny Reed*	15
The Makin's	*Albert R. Kates*	22
Run Amuck	*Maude Newbegin*	26
The Happy-go-lucky Street Car	*Mark Harmon*	33
An Eye For a Tooth	*Albert W. Tolman*	38
Which Was It?	*J. M. Crofton*	46
Bill	*Horatio Winslow*	53

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The Helping Hand of Hogan

BY FRANCIS W. DEVER

HEN a "bum" professes regeneration and, upon the strength of his eloquence apropos thereof, "works" you for a dime or, if you are more pliable, for a quarter, and one minute later you note the swing door of the nearest saloon in violent agitation behind his fluttering coat tails, it's not to be wondered that your milk of human kindness takes on a cheesy aspect. Of course we'll admit that the "bum" is the ultimate loser. You gave in the proper spirit and that "lets you out." But unless you have a bump of Charity as big as a Baldwin apple you'll scarce refrain from gloomily prognosticating your own damnation and—should the more venomous mood clutch you—fervently hoping the plausible rascal that discredited your acumen will, sooner or later, wriggle and writhe and squirm on the hottest griddle in Hades.

So the mind revolts at the preversion of any kind act.

Hogan, big, impetuous, fun-loving Hogan, had more than the average amount of benevolence in his make-up. Not being abnormally developed in this respect, however, after the incident at Louber's, a request upon him for anything greater than a nickle, coming in the classification of "touch," had to be accompanied by an affidavit of good faith or something equally as convincing, if it were to be successful.

He and I sat in Louber's, one night, looking at each other over a couple of steins.

Hogan was a "plain clothes man" off duty; I was on the reportorial staff of a New York daily, and off duty. Like any other metropolitan precinct detective, he had met with experiences not detailed in the police records, but of interest to the news hound. Many a fruitful tip had he given me, for which I was not ungrateful. We were close friends.

A half hour before, he greeted me on Fourteenth Street with:

"Well, old pal, what's the good word?"

"Good word be darned," was my surly reply. "I drew a sob assignment for the Sunday edition; and I've got until tomorrow noon to come across. I've scanned the police blotter, done the River Front, the East Side, the Red Light District; in fact, I've fine-combed every available bit of ground in the city, without result; and it's nearly eleven."

"How about Louber's?"

"Never occurred to me."

"Then you've missed a bet. There are worse hunting grounds for your game than Louber's. Come, I'm off for the night; let's go round. If you find nothing there, we'll have to cook up a tear producer with the assistance of Louber's suds."

So to Louber's we repaired.

If you happened in the neighborhood of Louber's and felt in need

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of a beer, Louber would not be likely to get your nickle.

And you would be forgiven for the weakness of your judgment only because you don't know Louber's and Louber's beer.

From the outside, Louber's is, in appearance, the typical cheap café. Cross the threshold and you marvel. Everything within is neat and clean and just antique enough to make you relish the atmosphere. It borders on the Tenderloin that was, but not by design. One of Louber's chief ambitions is to keep out the riff-raff. Jake Rauschmidt, his bouncer, knows the district like a book. If you're not a stranger you have to be right to get by Jake.

Where is Louber's, you ask? Ah, that's telling. And if I did, three hundred indignant New Yorkers would rise as one and denounce my treachery. It's hard enough to get a table now. For, speak it softly, Louber keeps good beer. Perhaps you know the kind that flows down with the smoothness of oil, and never makes you noisy, the kind that reminds you of bright lights, and palms, and soft music, and pretty women; and sometimes,—and sometimes,—of better days. Drink what you will of it, the bromides never follow.

And Eats! Oh, Joy! Oh, Bliss! Oh, Ecstacy! Louber's is the Temple of the Inner Man. Rosetti, the High Priest, is a chef of distinction; an artist in the line, and the Creator of a Culinary Style. His consomme,—but enough of this; I'm hungry as it is.

Hogan and I had the corner table, farthest from the entrance.

Searching for inspiration, I was gazing around the room, in a semi-trance, conjuring and flashing upon my mental screen, instantaneous impressions,—some too weird, too chimerical to merit consideration, others not intangible,—in the hope of culling and assembling a chain of incidents sufficiently related to form my story. My eyes rested upon the doorway when through it there came an overgrown, awkward fellow who lumbered over to our table. Taking the third chair, he joined us. His lack of ease, his unstudied disregard for the finer conventions; in fact, his whole bearing and appearance, accused him of being out of his element. Browned with the tan of sun and wind, he was a son of the Great Outdoors.

"It's a cold night," he opened.

It was the coldest night in January. We agreed with him.

"Gentlemen," he invited, "have something on me."

He didn't put it in the form of a query; it was a good-natured request, seeming to come from the bigness of his heart. And nowhere in it was there the slightest anticipation of possible refusal. The waiter refilled our steins and brought him a whiskey straight. Steins and glass met with musical clink and we drank to him.

"Are you fellers acquainted hereabouts?" he inquired.

"Somewhat," Hogan answered.

"Do you know a girl by the name o' Libby Green?"

"I've never heard of her," confessed Hogan.

I made a similar admission.

Plainly, the lad was disappointed. He leaned toward us confidingly.

"My name's Dory Beach," said he.

"Libby's my girl. I live with 'er folks at Sea Crest, down on the Jersey Coast. She came to New York about a year ago an' took a place as cashier in Tufgrub's restaurant on Twenty-third street. We corresponded regular until she wrote home about three months ago that she'd lost 'er job. That's the last we heard o' 'er. And her mother,—why the poor ol' woman's just about grievin' 'erself to death. Not bein' able to stand it any longer, I come to New York, hopin' to find the kid. She'd left the last address she wrote from, afore I got there. In a way, I was glad, for I didn't like the looks o' that house. I've hunted this town high an' low, but haven't seen hide nor hair of 'er. My money's about petered out, so I'll leave for home at one o'clock, over the Pennsylvania. Now what'n the deuce am I goin' to tell that poor ol' mother?"

"Where did she write from last?" queried Hogan.

My eyes met Hogan's significantly. In the street Beach mentioned, the parlor lamps were uniformly conspicuous for the then notorious erubescence of their hue.

"Have you tried the newspapers?" Hogan pursued.

"I've advertised in every mornin' paper in New York durin' the two weeks I've been here."

"How about the police?"

"Aw, she wouldn't be locked up. She's—"

At one of the tables back of Beach were a man and two young women. To them my attention was diverted. Louber, standing some distance from the door, looked at Rauschmidt and nodded inquiringly toward them when they entered. Rauschmidt shook his head. Though they didn't look good, he couldn't locate their photos in his mental gallery, so what was there to do but let them pass?

One of the girls was truly beautiful. She had dark hair and skin; lustrous brown eyes, with drooping lashes; and a friendly smile that drew away two cherry red curtains, revealing the pearly contour of her perfect, well-kept teeth. And when she laughed, rosy waves of color rippled over her oval face. I doubt that she was past twenty-one. A brown velvet suit; a hat of the same color and material, graced by a feather of golden yellow that once served no better in Beauty's cause on its former owner, the bird of paradise; brown suede shoes; and tan gloves; paid glowing tribute to the excellence of her taste, and accentuated her attractiveness.

And this girl was consuming Martinis—a small procession of them, in public—with gusto and abandon, and revelling in the presence of her evil companions!

The other—in extreme contrast—was an overdressed blonde. She wore jade ear-rings. Impressed upon her vicious, wolfish features, was the hell-born stamp of White Slavery.

The hard, set face, the cynical smile, the bold stare, and yet the furtive eye, combined to tell their unpleasant story in a manner rendering words superfluous and impotent.

The man's appearance was that of a human buzzard, a variety of the loathesome "bird" which subsists principally upon the decaying flesh of dead virtues though preferring to kill its

own food. (Occasionally you have observed this type of repulsive scavenger perched upon a busy corner, hungrily gazing at women and girls mounting and dismounting, from street cars.)

The brunette was beginning to feel the "booze." She had little to say, and said it quietly, until the Martinis began to get in their work. Suddenly, in evident reply to one of her companions, she raised her voice.

"I wish I'd never seen New York," she cried in shrill, half maudlin tones. "What did it ever do for me? It turned my heart to stone, my soul to Satan; it separated me from—"

Beach swung himself around and upon his feet, almost at the first articulation. For almost a minute he stared at the brunette, seeming not to believe his eyes. Almost every emotion the senses were capable of lighted and shadowed his countenance. Then, to the last atom, he threw his emotional force into a heart-thrilling, soul-compelling:

"L-i-b-b-y—s-w-e-e-t-h-e-a-r-t!"

Instantly the girl sobered; was on her feet. In her face surprise and shame vied for supremacy. A sickening consciousness of her position seemed to grip her.

"My Heavens, Dory!" she cried. "What are you doing here? How's ma and daddy, Dory? Don't come any nearer—I'm not your kind any more, boy. Just tell me how they are at home and—and go away. Tell them I'm doing well and will write."

By that time Beach had reached her. Backing, backing away, she was trying to keep him off. Masterfully his muscular arms engulfed her and tightened. She struggled, quivered, quieted.

"It don't make no difference what you done," he maintained stoutly, "you're my girl just the same. An' back you go with me to the ol' folks. They're nearly worried to death. New York ain't no place for you nohow," and then a disconcerting thought obsessed him.

"How much money've you got?" he asked anxiously.

"About two dollars."

"Then I'm afraid you'll have to take my ticket. I'll come as soon as I can. But I don't want *you* to spend another night in New York."

It was as if they were entirely alone. In an ordinary tone of voice, and with seeming artlessness, they were discussing the matter.

Hogan took advantage of a momentary lull in the conversation, arose, cleared his throat, and announced:

"Ladies and Gentlemen: While you have, no doubt, formed some sort of conclusion as to what this is all about, I might enlighten you by stating that one Mr. Beach of Southern New Jersey, after a half month's search in the jungles of Gotham, has found his lost sweetheart. It would seem that they are both willing to return home and like the good people in the story book, marry and live happily ever after, but a difficulty confronts them, —the lack of another ticket. However, we can easily remove that obstacle, and we can do more. We can give them a little wedding present—enough to start them right. Let's get busy. The odds are ten to one there isn't a piker in the house."

Placing a two dollar note in his hat, he passed it around. The crowd was

big, its response liberal and spontaneous. Fifty cents was the minimum. There were forty-one dollars in Hogan's hat when he had finished.

In the meantime, Beach, still holding the girl, stood open-mouthed, staring at the proceedings with a ludicrous expression of incomprehension. Hogan offered him the "present."

"I couldn't think o' takin' that," he protested. "I'd like to borrow my railroad fare so's I could go home with Libby. I'd return it soon as I could, but I don't need no more."

"This is a wedding present—don't you understand?" persisted Hogan. "You can't reject it without insulting us."

Beach gulped, and with choking voice, said: "Folks, you make it about impossible for us to refuse. We just can't thank you enough. We're sure grateful, ain't we, Libby?"

She sobbed acquiescence, with her head buried in Beach's arms.

Hogan consulted his watch. "Come, if you're going to catch that one o'clock train, you'll have to hustle and get packed up. Good-bye and best wishes," he said, forcing the money into Beach's hands.

Beach released the girl. Gracefully she bent her lithe figure into a pretty little courtesy. Then she turned to her erstwhile companions and waved farewell.

Hogan placed her hand on Beach's arm, opened the door, and with the subdued cheers and handclaps of the crowd, they were gone.

Now for the story. Hogan and I parted in front of Louber's. To my little room on Dormant Street, I hustled and resurrected an ancient and decrepit typewriter. Before it I sat, sighing for the technique, the imagination, the word-mastery of Maupassant, of Poe, of O. Henry; for the genius that was not mine, the genius to cope with the theme. Then came the inversion of sentiment. This would be my masterpiece. It would open every lachrymal flood-gate in New York. It would be the talk of the city for weeks to come.

And so, at two in the morning, I began, with the rap, tap, tap, of my machine, defying alike the enmity of my third-floor neighbors and loss of caste with my landlady. Libby was sent through a series of vicissitudes to the farewell at Louber's; Hogan was placed upon the loftiest pedestal of philanthropy; with Beach I dealt well and kindly, and dilated upon the nobility of his nature, and I stigmatized Libby's companions less than the system that produced them. Veiled was the locale as were the characters, but none who knew Louber's could fail to recognize the atmosphere. And into it all I threw my soul.

Seven hours were consumed before I finished and cast myself upon the bed exhausted. I slept. I dreamed. It was Sunday morning in Newspaper Row. Newsboys, scurrying here and there, were vociferating:

"Read Collins's great story in the Crescent. The best story of the year. Get a Crescent while they last." The edition was going rapidly.

Through the crowd I passed, into the Crescent Building, up to the "City Room." There I took the congratulations of the staff with becoming modesty. Even Wallace, our star, one of the brightest in the newspaper con-

stellation, frankly, ungrudgingly, admiringly, heaped praise upon me. Baker, the "old man," was of few words.

"Collins!" he bawled from his sanctum. I stepped to the door.

"Collins," said he, "that story of yours is a gem. It will live. It will also add five dollars per week to your salary."

What a beautiful dream!

Thinking to elevate Hogan in the estimation of his superior, I stopped at the police station, on my way to the office, about eleven A. M., and showed my "copy" to Sergeant O'Neill, a genial, whole-souled Irishman of the old school, with a brogue that was the pride of the A. O. H.

He read the story; and, to my infinite surprise, did not derive from it the pleasurable appreciation of one in sympathy with the kindly act Hogan had performed.

"A fóine philanthropist Hogan may be, but he's a divil of a plain clothes man," he remarked in disgust; and submitted to my startled gaze, two photographs.

Your guess is correct. They were of Libby and Beach.

"Wh-wh-where did these come from?" I stammered.

"From Philadelphia, where your friends are wanted for attimptin' the badger game. Thim and their hard lookin' supers must've been sadly short of change. Oi've known fourth-rate burglars that wouldn't 've shtooped to the shtunt they pulled at Louber's."

"What did Hogan say?"

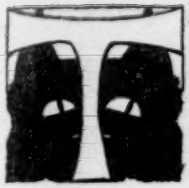
"Oi'd be riskin' me sowl to tell ye."

Libby and Beach were picked up in Jersey City the following day. The Crescent "sob" story of the next Sunday was furnished by the Crown Syndicate. Three or four days later this item appeared in the metropolitan dailies:

James Logan Collins, formerly of the Crescent staff, is now with the Palladium

Billy Crayden---Outlaw

BY HAROLD DE POLO



THE young outlaw brought his dripping, foam-flecked horse to a halt as the base of a high mountain towered into the air before him. He drew a handkerchief from his pocket, mopped his streaming face, and scanned the long, undulating roll of prairie land that lay stretched out behind him. Then, as he saw no black speck that told of a pursuer in sight, he breathed a long sigh of relief and smiled with satisfaction.

At last he was free—free once more from that narrow room in the little jail back at Gray Rock, with its darkness, its iron bars, its damp walls, where he had spent the last two years of his life. Last night, after he had gained the confidence of his guard, he had gently overpowered him, placed a gag in his mouth, and made his way to where he had seen the sheriff's horse tethered. Since then he had ridden madly, making his beast do the best that was in him and keeping far ahead of his pursuers; and now, early in the brisk, sunny morning, he was once more free—free, free, free. He would not have to spend the other year that was still on his sentence in that dark, gloomy jail.

He would ride over the mountain before him, as well as over many other mountains, until he had passed the boundary line and left the State of Arizona back of him. Whether he would then do honest work or continue the life he had started a few years ago, he had not yet decided. He felt bitter and at odds with the world in general, telling himself that it had never given him a fair chance. Three years before, when he had lost his job punching cattle because of ill-feeling between himself and his foreman, he had tried his best to find something else to do. That seemed impossible; for every place he went he was met with the same story—they were already carrying too many men. So, as it had been the foreman's fault that they had been enemies, it had only served to embitter him more than ever. Then, when hunger had finally gripped him, he had met a man who had whispered to him how he might fill his stomach as well as his pockets. At first he had been angry; but then, as he made himself believe that the world had treated him wrongly, he had listened and agreed. So his brief career of outlawry had started. That night he had held up a stage with his new-found acquaintance; some few months later, when the money from that was gone, he had tried a bigger thing and held up a train. This time, though, he had been caught. His youth, as well as it being but his second offense, as he frankly confessed, had made the jury feel that three years in prison was sufficient punishment for him. And now, after escaping when he had served but two years, he was free again to do as he wished.

Once more he looked at the prairie stretched out so endlessly about him. He saw no black speck as yet, and so, with a contented smile, he clicked to his animal and took the narrow, winding path which led up the mountainside. In his heart, though, he felt a great anger against the world. He again made himself believe that it had not treated him decently, that people had never given him a fair chance, that everyone was against him, and that the world owed him a living that he must take as best he could—no matter how. He thought of all these things as he made his way upward, wishing that he had some friend or parents to whom he might turn in his hour of need and who would help him go straight. Yet he had none, and it made his face grow even more bitter and hard as he thought of this. It was not the face of a hardened outlaw; it was, rather, the face of an honest man who had gone wrong because of an unfortunate combination of circumstances. His deep blue eyes were open and frank, his chin was firm and determined, and there was a certain pleasing, agreeable look all about him that would have made people like and trust him. Now it was pale and a trifle cynical, that was all. So he continued riding up the mountain, his strong shoulders and usually upright head thrown far forward as he thought of the bad luck that had made him a refugee from the law, and as he threshed out in his brain whether or not he would go straight. Then, suddenly, he laughed. Why should he care—why? The world that had treated him so badly lay stretched out ahead of him, with the living that it owed him there for the taking. Take it he would—in the manner that he had on that first night of his meeting with the bandit. Yes; it was the easiest way!

As he neared the top of the mountain, still brooding morosely, he became aware that people were close to him, as he heard the low tones of distant voices. Instantly, he became alert. His hand shot down to the revolver he had taken from his guard, his face grew sharp and anxious, and into his frank eyes there crept the look of fear that the hunted have. He craned his neck to catch the words; but all he knew, as the wind was blowing in the other direction, was that a man and woman were somewhere ahead, a bit to the right. Very quietly, he turned his horse about and made off away from them.

But he did not go very far. Suddenly, on a gust of wind that came to him, he heard angry words come from the woman's lips, that told him she was somehow in danger.

"Oh—you *brute!*"

Immediately, he threw all caution and fear of capture aside. A woman, to him, was a wonderful being—a sacred being whom every man must respect and protect. It was the one thing he remembered of his mother's teaching, in the dim past when he had been a boy. And here, close to him, a woman was apparently in need of protection from someone whom she had called a brute. His duty was plain. He must go back, even if there were ten men there, and aid the woman who was in need of him. And, with the prison pallor of his face giving way to an angry redness, he cut his horse

across the flank and made for the place from where the cry had come.

Ahead of him, under a gnarled old tree, he saw a man and a girl, their horses tethered close to him. The girl's fair face was flaming crimson, her eyes were sparkling, and her golden hair was blowing about her forehead as if something besides the breeze had been the cause of it. The man, a tall, lank fellow with a hard mouth and an ugly face, was standing close to her and speaking loudly:

"Don't want any o' my attentions, eh? Well, lemme tell you, gal—you're too all-fired proud an' high-tempered, see? I tell you I love you an' that I'm goin' to have you, *un'erstan'?*"

The girl raised her head and flared back at him, her voice cutting like a whip. "Shame! I tell you that I don't love you, and yet you've followed me and tried to embrace me by force.

Her companion, in answer, laughed harshly and jumped forward, once more trying to encircle her in his arms.

Then the young outlaw acted. He sprang from his horse, extracted his revolver, and ran forward.

"Here you—stop that," he blazed.

The other turned about with a start, gazed astonishingly at the intruder, and then shot his hand down to his holster. "You jest keep out o' this, see?" he snarled.

But the outlaw threw back his head and leveled his gun. "Look here, friend," he said, his voice quite even, "I reckon you don't feel like passing off right away—what? Just put your hands above your head and get onto your cayuse and make dust fly—quick!"

The other, for a moment, eyed the wiry form and firm face of the man who had the better of him. Then, biting his lips nervously, he very slowly raised his two hands above his head.

"Oh, thank you," muttered the girl, speaking for the first time, as she looked at the newcomer with relief and gratefulness in her eyes.

The outlaw walked slowly forward. He removed his hat and nodded to the girl, speaking falteringly. "I—I'm glad I was able to help you out, miss!" Then, to the man who had insulted her: "I thought I said you'd better make dust fly!"

He of the vicious face took a chance. He shot straight out for his opponent, making a grab for the leveled weapon with one hand as he reached for his own with the other. The outlaw, not wanting to shoot, tried to step out of the way and strike him with the butt of his revolver. His gun hand, though, was caught in a firm grasp, and so, his brain working quickly, he shot his left hand down and reached for the other's revolver. As he succeeded in grasping it, they both fell over in a kicking, grunting ball, each man trying for the other's firearms; while the girl, white-faced, watched them with wide, frightened eyes.

For several moments they struggled about, rolling over the ground in an indistinguishable ball, striking against trees, breaking through bushes, fighting like mad beings for the possession of each other's weapons; and all the time the girl prayed fervently that the stranger would be the victor. Finally the tension broke. The young outlaw managed to pull his antagonist's weap-

on from its holster, and, with a quick snap of his wrist, sent it flying down the mountainside, out of reach forever. Then, having nothing to fear from it any longer, he suddenly released his hold on his own revolver, doubled his right hand into a fist, and gave a short, hard jab with all the strength that he had in his body. Directly on the point of the chin his fist landed, and his opponent, with a sickening moan, loosed his hold and sank back, quite unconscious. The girl breathed a sigh of relief.

The young outlaw rose from the ground, stretched his aching body, and then picked up his own revolver. He spoke to the girl awkwardly, as he always did with women. "I—excuse me if I've bothered you miss, I—you see, I didn't expect I'd have to hurt him. I—I thought—"

The girl came near and looked him straight in the eyes. "I—I thank you," she said, her voice full and sincere. "I thank you so much, Mr. ——"

The outlaw lowered his head and blushed. "Crayden—Billy Crayden!" Then, suddenly remembering what he was, he looked anxiously at the girl to see whether or not she had ever heard his name.

Apparently she had not. "Yes, Mr. Crayden, I do not know what I should have done if you hadn't come along. I— But *I* must tell you my name, so that you may know whom you have helped—Ruth Joyce," and she laughed a happy, silvery laugh that, somehow, made Billy Crayden wish that he was not what he was.

The man behind him showed signs of life and again the outlaw became a man used to dealing with men. He bent over the prostrate form and yanked the other onto his feet. The man rubbed his eyes dazedly and looked wonderingly about him.

"Get onto your cayuse and make dirt fly," said Billy, his voice colder and more even than before, while in his eyes there was a menacing light.

His antagonist, still dully, walked over to his animal, untied him, and, mounting hastily, rode swiftly off. But, just as he was almost from sight, he turned in his saddle and shook his fist. "I'll git you yet, young feller—remember!" A laugh was the only answer as he rode away.

Then Billy Crayden remembered that he was fleeing from the arm of the law. He knew that he had left the sheriff and his two deputies far behind, yet every moment he delayed they were undoubtedly coming nearer and nearer. Soon the news of his escape would be all over the country and he could see the bill, posted on trees and buildings, showing his picture and offering so many dollars for his capture. Therefore, the sooner he got into the next state the better, that was certain.

He looked at the ground and plucked awkwardly at his hat, his heart rising in his throat, somehow, as he thought that he would never see this girl again —this girl who was the first of her kind whom he had ever wished to see more than once. With her, he knew not why, he did not feel the usual bashfulness he felt before all women, those beings whom he did not know.

"I—I'm sorry, Miss Joyce, I—I have to be getting along," he said, his voice low.

The girl seemed frankly disappoint-

ed. Her eyes opened wide and she smiled poutingly at him. "Oh, *that's* mean! After you've been my rescuer you're going to run off before I've even had a chance to properly thank you. Why, I wanted you to ride home with me and let Dad thank you, too. He's foreman over on the Double Triangle ranch—just down the mountain and about five miles to the west. Really, you must ride back and—and —why, stay to dinner with us, that's it!" And she brushed back her straggling hair as she laughed her jolly, pleasant laugh.

"I—I reckon I'd better be going, though, honest, I—"

"Oh, well, you must sit down a moment and rest after your fight. I do hope you're not hurt, are you? Good, do sit down. I always come here every morning, just to sit under this old tree and look off for miles and miles and miles at the prairie, that seems stretched out to the end of the world. I saw you coming, a tiny black speck growing larger and larger, over an hour ago. Don't *you* love it all—all the endless plain, and the blue sky, and the great ball of sun, and—oh, the gorgeousness of it?"

Billy Crayden heaved a great sigh and threw back his head, taking a long, deep breath. His mouth set firmly and he looked over the undulating stretch of plain with a hard, fixed gaze. Finally he spoke, but his voice sounded queer and mechanical. "Love it—love it? I reckon I do love it!" God! How many times, cooped up in his narrow cell, had he wished that he might be in such a place as this—free, free, free!

The girl sat down, apparently not noticing his odd voice and looks, and patted the grass by her side. "If you *do* love it so much," she said, with another silvery laugh, "you'd better sit down and enjoy it a little!"

The outlaw knew that, for safety's sake, he should have refused. He should have mounted his horse and ridden away as hard as he could, for he had lost too much time as it was. Yet some hidden force took told of him and drew him down to a sitting posture, making him wish longingly, at the same time, that he was not a refugee from the law and that he might sit by this girl who was so nice and comradely without feeling that he had not the right to do so. Had she known what he was, he believed she would probably have risen immediately and left him in disgust. Why had he done what he had? Why, why, why? What luck, what luck!

"Do you know," she said, "I really don't know what I'd have done if you hadn't come along just when you did. Really, I don't. He—Jim Lowrey—is the foreman on the Bar Y ranch, just next to ours. He's been bothering me for more than a year. Oh, I dislike him so—he's so mean and dishonorable!"

Billy felt a lump in his throat. The disgust with which she had pronounced that last word had made him feel guiltier than ever and wonder what she would think if she knew what he was—what he was!

"Where were you going when you came to the rescue, Mr. Crayden?" she asked, quite innocently.

He faltered out his answer. "I—I—oh, I was just riding over the country looking for a punching job, that's

all. Just felt like traveling," he lied.

The girl clapped her hands. "Good!" she cried. "Just the thing! Dad needs one or two more men, and you might just as well work under him. I'm sure you'd like him and that he'd like you. He'd be sure to after he found out what you did for his daughter." Again came that silvery laugh that stirred up all the good thoughts in him—the laugh that made him want to be an honest man with the right to hear her laugh, and she seemed to wait anxiously for his answer.

"I—I'm afraid—afraid I'll have to get along, though. I—I have some friends further—further on," he muttered.

The girl did not answer him. Instead, she seemed lost in thought as she looked straight ahead of her far out onto the prairie. Presently she spoke. "Do you know, Mr. Crayden, that what I dislike above all things is a man who won't take his medicine, as we say. I've told Mr. Lowrey, many, many times, that I didn't love him and he knows I mean it. Yet he always sulks and becomes angry and persists in saying that he'll yet marry me. He can't stand aside and take his disappointment like a man; and then, today—oh, what a coward he was—what a coward!"

The young outlaw did not notice that she was looking searchingly at him out of the corner of her eye. "Take his medicine." "Coward." That was exactly what he was—a coward who was afraid to take his medicine, nothing more! What he should have done, to clear himself, would have been to remain for that other year in the jail and take his medicine. Then he could have started out into the world a free man with a better chance. What would he not give now to be that—a free man with no fear of the law! Then he would be able to go home with this girl and work under her father and—but he must not think of these things. There would never be any hope for him. Yet how he felt toward this girl—the first girl that had ever made him feel so! "Take his medicine." "Coward." He was *doing* what she did not like and *was* what she did not like!

The girl had been watching him closely, a soft, kind light in her eyes as she looked at his boyish face, so pale and drawn from his prison life and from the painful thoughts that were troubling him. While he, with head hanging low on his breast, stared dismally and hopelessly at the ground.

Presently she spoke, an anxious look on her face as if she were about to see the outcome of a thing that meant a great deal. "Oh, Mr. Crayden, just look at those tiny specks far out on the prairie. Would you believe that they were men and horses?"

Instantly, the young outlaw's head shot back and he sprang to his feet, the fear of the hunted once more in his eyes. He was breathing heavily as he scanned the roll of plain below him and finally centered his eyes on three small, swiftly moving specks that he knew must be the sheriff of Gray Rock and his two deputies. His hand unconsciously fell to his revolver.

He started to turn about and make for his horse, for the moment all thought of the girl by his side had gone from him. Then, for several

long minutes, he stood undecided, his forehead creased with a frown and the muscles on his face working as if he were undergoing some great strain. The girl, who had risen to her feet, watched him with nervous, hopeful eyes.

Suddenly he turned about, his face white and set, and spoke with a jerky fierceness: "Miss—Miss Joyce. Do you know what those men are? They are the sheriff of Gray Rock and his two deputies; and they're after me—*me!* I—I—I'm sorry I didn't tell you at first. I'm an outlaw who's broken jail with a year still to run on his sentence. I—I'm not taking my medicine and I'm a coward! I want to tell you and want to have you believe me, though, when I say that I didn't hold up a stage until I'd been refused work all over and was dead hungry. The second *I was* to blame, for I was a fool and thought that the world hated me and that I could steal from it to get even. I tried to rob a train and was caught, that's all. I'm no good, God knows, and I'm not fit to have sat by you, I—excuse me, I—"

He paused an instant and looked at her appealingly and then continued in a voice that was a trifle choky. "I want you to know that you've made a great change in me. You're the only woman, beside my mother, that I've ever known—for I *feel* I know you! I—I've changed my mind—you've made me do it! Listen, I'm not going to get onto my cayuse and run away like a coward that won't take his medicine! I'm going to get onto my cayuse and ride down the mountain—ride down there and go out and meet the sheriff and give myself up—that's all! Then I'll come out of jail, in a year, a free man with a chance to fight the world. And it's all because you've made me see right—see that to look a man or a woman straight in the eyes you've got to be an honorable man. There, that's all! Thanks—thanks!" He turned sharply aside, his head bent low and a great pain in his heart as he thought that he would never again see this girl who had stirred honor—and love—in his breast.

The girl looked at him with a joyous light in her eyes, her gentle, pretty face soft and sympathetic. "Wait, Mr. Crayden. I—I want to tell you, to be fair, that I knew who you were at the beginning. I recognized you from your picture in the paper, the instant you told me your name. I do not disrespect you—I respect you for being a man and being willing to go back so that you may come out with a clean record. I wanted to test you, and I've been trying all the while—trying and hoping—to make you go back and take your medicine. I understand everything—why you did what you did. It must be hard to be hungry and have work refused you all over—very hard. I want to know if you won't let me shake your hand and wish you good luck before you go and tell you that you must come to Dad for help when you leave there!"

Billy Crayden faced her. She was standing there with a wistful, friendly smile on her lips and her right hand held straight out. For a moment he looked at her as if he did not believe what he heard. Then, as he realized the truth of it, he slowly put out his own hand and grasped hers. He raised his head high, his chin firm and

his eyes sparkling with the hope that had left them several years ago. He seemed younger and an altogether different man.

"Miss—Miss Joyce," he said, his voice very full, "I—you don't know how you make me feel. I'm not the same man, I—" He paused for an instant, and then, looking her straight in the eyes, spoke quickly. "I—I will come back—in a year. And—and I wonder that when I do come back, if I can make good, I can—can stand a chance of—of seeing you—seeing quite a bit of you?" His voice went lower and he dropped his eyes, embarrassed. "Seeing—seeing you *all* the time? Whether—"

The girl broke in, a blush on her cheeks and her voice, too, low for the first time. "Yes, come back—come back and make good. I— A man who defends a woman when he is being pursued by the law and every second means time is—is a *man!* Yes, come back and make good—I know you will!"

Billy Crayden, very swiftly, drew her hand to his lips and kissed it reverently. "Thank you," he gulped. "I'll be back in a year and show you that I've got something big in me—something that *you've* brought out!"

Then he turned quickly about, made his way to his horse, and mounted him. Without once looking back, he rode off down the steep mountain trail to the sheriff and his two deputies who were steadily approaching; but he rode with a light heart and the knowledge that he was riding, not into hopeless imprisonment, but into something that would be a stepping-stone to an honorable life with a girl worth fighting for as his goal. And he knew that he would win.

The Jasmine Flower

BY FLORENCE BRINEY REED

OUTSIDE the wind was blowing and a fine snow crushed its soft flakes against the window panes, but within the room was warmth and color. Rugs, books, and pictures, united in harmony, and the fire upon the tiled hearth burned cheerfully, and crackled importantly as though defying the simmering radiator in the corner, and saying: "You—may be useful—and necessary—but who could be moved to retrospect—to imagine—to dream—while contemplating your ugly coils. I am a companion—decorative—cheering and inspiring."

So the fire glowed, and the snow fell faster and thicker, while the two men before the hearth smoked and talked as friends will on such a night, in such surroundings.

Finally, said one, "I saw Winnefred Agnew today," and the other answered, "Did you? I have seen her frequently since her return. She is more beautiful than ever." And his friend, looking at him curiously, said, "I never understood, John, nor did any one, the reason for your broken engagement. Winnefred surely was a beautiful girl, talented, wealthy, and all that, and at first you two seemed very happy together."

John Raymond, leaning forward, gazed into the fire for a moment, then said, "She is a splended woman—and at first—as you say—we were very happy, but after— However, Winnefred is too sensible and fine to desire to hold a man to a promise, after he has broken it in spirit and letter, even granting her affection for me. That, I think, was soon overcome—and she is happy—I am sure of that—happier than we would have been together, after— I think, Wilford, I'll tell you about it. I have always meant to, sometime. You may laugh, if you choose, but I hope you will listen patiently," and lying back in the easy chair, with his eyes still fixed on the fire, he began:

"It was on that trip south, two years ago, when I had the fever. We had been traveling some days and were somewhere in Mississippi or Louisiana—I never could locate it exactly—one night, when the train, which had been creeping along all afternoon, came to a stop and the conductor told us we might as well get out and exercise for a bridge was down ahead of us, and it might be four hours before it was fixed. Behind us we could see a few twinkling lights, a little hamlet, a mile or so off, and before us the woods and open country.

"We all started out on an exploring tour, and the conductor called after us to take our time, but to listen for the signal from the engineer, which would call us back in good season. The night *was* lovely, with a clear, full moon, and as bright as day. As the gayer passengers, in chattering groups,

passed me, going back toward the town, I found myself turning toward the woods and presently, finding a clear path opening through the trees, I followed it. The trees were draped down like gray banners and festooned with soft, Southern moss, which hung itself across my path. The trees were set in regular fashion along the road. It seemed like an avenue, and I was curious to see where it led. Presently, there was a curve to the left and I came out into an open space—a beautiful lawn—in the midst of which stood a house with a broad veranda in front, supported by massive pillars. The avenue wound through huge iron gates of beautiful design, held by brick pillars. A great magnolia tree stood at one side, and under it was a bench or seat, of carved stone. As I drew nearer—and it didn't seem at all strange or unusual that I should be there—I saw a figure in the shadow of the tree, rise and come to meet me with arms outstretched.

"Oh, you have come at last! I have been waiting so long," she cried. It was a girl—the loveliest girl I ever saw. She had the sweetest eyes and face, and soft golden curls arranged in a quaint fashion. Her gown was quaint as well—a silk of some sort—white or pale blue, with wide, ruffled skirt and little puffs for the sleeves, and she had the most perfect arms and neck I have ever seen or dreamed of.

"She came straight up to me and said softly, looking into my face with her lovely eyes, 'You have not been very angry with me, have you? I am so sorry for it all, John!'

"Yes—she said those words, and when she spoke my name and held up her hands with that appealing look, what could I do but take her in my arms? Oh, stare away, Wilford! you can't understand, of course, but I'm going to tell you the whole story. It did not seem at all strange or unusual to me. Two lines of poetry I had heard or read reiterated in my brain:

'I have been here before; I know not where
nor when,
You have been mine before—some where
some place.'

while she repeated, 'I have been waiting so long John! But you have come back to me.'

"Well, presently, we went over to the stone bench and sat there hand in hand. I remember the very carvings on that bench—a garland of roses along the back and funny, fat dolphins or something of the kind, for arms. And she laughed as she patted one's fat back and said, 'Remember how we quarreled once about these silly beasts, John? But we will never quarrel again, will we?'

"And as she laid her head on my heart, I answered, 'No.'

"There was an old sun dial in the circular grass plot before the house and she said merrily, as I glanced that way, 'Tell me the motto again, John!' and I answered, I don't know why, 'It is the motto of the shining hours,' and together, my arm about her, we went to it and read the old motto in the bright moonlight: 'I only mark the shining hours,' and she whispered that there had been no time marked since I left, for all the hours were dark ones.

"That was a wonderful night, Wilford; there in the shadows of the old magnolias,—a night such as comes but

once in a lifetime, or never. I do not know how long I had been there when I heard, faintly and far away, the whistle of the train—the signal which we had been told to listen for. I arose, remembering, and then she clung to me and wept and trembled, and begged me not to go.

"'I can bear anything but parting from you,' she cried. 'Please—please don't leave me any more.'

"I think leaving her there was the hardest thing I ever did in my life, but I felt that it would be for only a few days or weeks; that I should return, and I told her so, and kissed her, and she smiled and bade me go, and said trustfully, 'I believe you, John! You have promised and I shall be waiting for you, and when you come again, there shall be no more partings. Kiss me now, and go, but this time it is not in anger, and you know I love you, don't you, John?'

"And so I left her. I looked back as I turned into the woods and saw it all clear and beautiful in the moonlight—the white pillared mansion, the sun-dail, the magnolia tree and the girl standing there, just where I left her. She had pinned the jasmine from her hair on my coat and whispered that it had come from the old hedge by the garden, and that she had always worn one of the blossoms so I might know that she was sorry for the quarrel and that she truly loved me. Well, I found my way back to the train and they took me off at New Orleans, ill from that fever, which so nearly finished me.

"When I had quite recovered, my first act was to search for the old house and the girl, but—I never found them. That is why my engagement to Winnefred was broken. That is why I have been so indifferent to all your 'rosebud garden of girls.'

"The girl I love, the only girl I ever could love, the girl who is mine by every memory of that magic moonlight night—is somewhere, waiting for me, and I am longing, praying almost every minute of my life for the time to come when I can hear her say again, 'Oh, you have come at last, I have been waiting so long; and when that time comes, there are to be no more partings.'"

There was a moment's silence in the room. The clamor of the street sounded loudly; the log fell in the fireplace, and a sparkle of fire mounted the chimney. As Langdon replaced the log, his friend resumed his story.

"It seems, no doubt, a mere phantasy to you, an unusual thing, but I know that I was awake and alive that night, and I know that girl, with her fair face and golden curls, was not a dream, an illusion. Look here!" and taking a leather case from his pocket, he opened it and handed it to his friend. A faint, sweet fragrance rose from it, coming from the yellow leaves of a blossom pressed and dried; this, and a few strands of soft, heavy silk, were all the little case contained.

"You see!" said Raymond, "those things are real enough; and taking the little case in his hand, once more he tenderly touched, first the dead flower and then the twisted silk, gently.

"That flower is the Cape Jasmine, the sweetest flower in the world I think. She pinned it on my coat and laughing, said I must keep it until I came again. And the silk—when I held her in my arms for good-bye,

the fringe of her sleeve caught upon my coat and we could not untangle it, so I cut it off with my pocket knife and she laughed. God! Langdon! You don't know what it means to me, the memory of that night: the old white pillared mansion—down there somewhere—the mystery of it all, and the love of that girl—lost to me forever!"

"But," said his friend, curiously, "could you not find her? You went back again?"

"Yes," came the answer, hesitatingly. "I went all over the road I had traveled. I stopped; I questioned everyone; but it was a fruitless search. Once I found a place just such as I remember, where the train stopped that night. There was the long, level stretch of track; the woods on our left, with the wagon track through them; and the little town, with its twinkling lights far behind. I remembered it so well, and yet no one could recognize my description, in the little town.

"Finally, an old man agreed to drive me out over the road I fancied I had traveled. We jogged along and he turned as I directed. My heart beat rapidly as we drew farther into the woods, for it seemed every pendant clump of moss, every knarled trunk, was as a familiar beacon. As we neared the end of the woods, my guide said, peering about him, 'I reckon, ez this here road is the old avenue to the Seaton place. Yes; yonder, you see some of the old ruins. Like to drive up, sir? They ain't nothin' else to see here. Guess you-all was mistaken in your house.'

"A queer feeling came over me then," said Raymond, staring at the fire, with his hand absently caressing the little leathern case, "a chill kind of feeling, which never has left me. I know every inch of that road now, and when we came out into the broad, open space, I looked for the iron gates, the magnolia tree, the stone bench and the sun dial, and the white pillared house beyond, which held the girl—*my* girl!"

"Well, were they there?" said his friend, breaking the silence.

"There was nothing there but ruin: Heaps of crumbled brick and stone; the old bench, with the dolphin arms was overturned and broken; the sundial pillar was prostrate; there was but a remnant of the iron gates, rusted and sagging from a crumbling pillar. It was desolate despair. My guide looked about him and remarked, 'Fine old place, this was once; but the old Colonel let it go down after his darter died, and since he's gone too, it's gone to rack.'

"I got out and walked, I fancy a little unsteadily, over to the bench. It was broad daylight now and the scene was changed and yet it seemed to me I could hear the rustling of her silken skirts, smell the fragrance of the jasmine, and see her sweet face smiling up at me." He dropped into silence again, and after a moment resumed: "The man with me climbed out of the cart too, and began to walk about, poking among the stones and leaves, and talking cheerfully, seeming not to notice anything unusual in my manner. Presently, I realized he was speaking of the former occupants of the place and I listened very attentively to his remarks, which were all about

this Colonel and his daughter.

"'Evelyn—Miss Evelyn,' he said, as I remember, 'was a mighty beautiful girl. The Colonel just about worshipped her, and she was going to be married to a young man, when the war broke out and he had to go, and he was killed, and it turned her head, but she was harmless enough and lived here with her old black Mammy to watch her, and the Colonel, too. And she would always set here by the gate, watching for him to come back, as long as she lived, and they did say that she still set here afterwards, too, for she would have it that he was coming some day, and that she could not rest without seeing him and bidding him goodbye, for she and him had quarrelled when he went away and she had sent him off angry.'

"All this, and more," continued John Raymond, "did my guide tell, until finally he cried, 'Gosh! Stranger, you look mighty white, I don't reckon you-all's right strong yet, after that fever. 'Tain't a healthy place here, either. We'd better be traveling.'

"And so we left it, and when I asked him, later, how long since 'Miss Evelyn' died, he said, "Bout thirty year, I reckon, and the place has been a ruin for half that time.'"

Again there was silence, which Raymond broke at last by saying, in a matter-of-fact tone, "I'd like to know what your opinion of it is, Wilford! I didn't tell it just for your idle amusement, you know."

"What do I think of it?" burst out his friend. "Why, I think it is the wildest flight of the imagination—a fever dream which was too vivid to be forgotten, a half recollection of something read or heard. It can't be anything else, you know," and with a vigorous assault upon the half charred log, he again set the sparks flying, but Raymond only smiled and said quietly, "Yes. It seems reasonable enough to explain it that way, but how do you explain these?" and he held the leather case out where the light fell upon it.

"Nonsense! A flower you could pick up anywhere, and some strands of silk, prove nothing."

"As you choose, Wilford! I did not expect you to understand nor believe me. No one could—and yet—"

Langdon dropped the tongs with a crash and, going to his friend's side, placed his hands upon his shoulder with a protective gesture. "John," he said, "you and I have been friends a good long time—many years. You know I believe you, and for your sake, since it seems to matter so much, I'll try to see it as you do. Yes, I'll even admit that there may have been a girl, and a house, and all the rest of it; that she's waiting for you some place, and that you'll find her again. Perhaps, the old ruined place was only a coincidence."

John Raymond looked up into his friend's face a moment, and replacing the little case in his pocket, he rose, saying in a tone which rang with conviction and determination: "Find her again, I surely will; perhaps in this life, perhaps in another. I have not the least doubt of that, nor that she is still waiting for me somewhere, and sometime I shall see her coming toward me, with arms outstretched and her sweet voice saying, 'John! John! I have been waiting so long, but you have come back to me.' Ah!

but the waiting is hard—so hard!" he added in an undertone.

Crossing to the mantel, he bowed his head on his arm, like a grieving child, while Wilford Langdon stood silent and abashed in the presence of things he could not understand. He was conscious of a feeling of great relief when the man by the mantel lifted his head and said in his ordinary manner, "So now you know all about it, Wilford! We'll not speak of it again. Too bad you can't join us on our trip next week. Mardi Gras is gay, and you would find it quite a novel experience."

"You are going South again, then?" said Wilford, conscious of a vague feeling of uneasiness, which disappeared as his friend said cheerfully, "Yes. I'm going South again, as far as New Orleans, and perhaps farther. I cannot tell. Good night and good bye, Wilford! It is late, and you are tired. Good bye, old friend!" and he was gone.

In the weeks that followed, Wilford Langdon pondered frequently upon his friend's story, always coming to the conclusion that it must have been a dream, and then would come the disturbing memory of the flower and the silken threads.

The party which John Raymond had joined for the Southern trip were proceeding gayly along their way, and he was following them, in fancy, guided by picture post-cards, when a messenger boy brought him a yellow slip which bore the single line:

"John is dead. Letter follows."

The message was dated from a little unknown town in Louisiana and there was nothing to do but wait for the letter, which came on a stormy, blustering morning, and which Wilford carried in his pocket, unopened, until he could leave the office and be alone in his room. It was hurriedly written and ran as follows:

Dear Will:—

Poor old John's death will be a shock to you. It was to us. He seemed much as usual. You know what a quiet fellow he's always been. More so, since that fever he had two years ago. He seemed to enjoy all of the trip as much, or more, perhaps, than any of us and looked just as usual. After we got into Louisiana, we were delayed a good deal by the flooded bayous, and finally, near the little town where I sent the message, we came to a full stop. We were in the compartment playing a game of whist, when the porter came along and said, "Washout, sah! Up in front—be delayed couple of hours—mebby you gemmen would like to walk around, sahs."

As he said this, John, who was next the window, looked out. He stared so long and strangely that we asked him what he saw. And then he got up quite suddenly and started for the door. We thought his manner a little strange, but followed him. When we got outside the car, we found ourselves in a lonely spot, with thick woods on our left and a sort of drive opening through them. John was headed for that direction, walking rapidly. It was bright moonlight. He was a good deal ahead of us and paid no attention to us when we called him, and so, laughing and singing and rallying him generally, we plunged into the woods after him.

Presently, the trees grew thinner; there was a great open space beyond, and it was here, as the path or road turned to the left, that we saw John running. I think we felt a premonition then, all of us, for we stopped our noise and ran too, as fast as possible. I soon gained the lead and was quite close to him when we came out into the open place. The path we were on led between broken gates, like a driveway, and up around in a circle, before a pile of broken old pillars and stones and trash, to a ruined house.

And, now, Wilford, what comes next, is for you and me only, to know. Poor John was our friend. No one needs to know it besides ourselves. The others were too far behind to hear his words, and I didn't tell them. But this is God's truth, as I'm a living man. When John reached the gateway, he held out his arms and cried in

the gladdest tone I ever heard in my life, "My darling! I knew you were waiting for me. I've come back to you," and then he fell forward, and as I hurried up and lifted him, he opened his eyes and smiled and said in faint whispers, "And there—shall be—no more partings—never—any more."

Then, in an instant, all the happiness—the living-ness went out of his face, and he was gone, just as the others came up with us. The doctor said his heart had been weakened by that fever and this might have happened any time. The boys thought his death must have been hastened by the rapid walking and running, but why he started off in that fashion they couldn't guess, nor could I, if I hadn't heard what he said. That proved, poor John, that his mind was affected. But this is only for us to know. I'm putting in this letter a flower which I found under his hand just as it was thrown out when he fell. I believe they call it Cape Jasmine. It is very sweet. There must have been a bush of it near, (though I did not remember seeing it,) for I recall the fragrance, which was so strong it made me almost sick. Don't think I'm a sentimental fool, but the whole thing has upset me, and some way I felt you would like the flower. There was one like it in his pocket case. I left it with him. You remember his broken engagement? That flower made me wonder if we knew all of the story of his other Southern trip. We sent the body on back to Wisconsin, to his mother.

Well—Mardi Gras will not be very gay for me, but I'll have to see it, I suppose. I'll see you on my return to New York.

With all good wishes for yourself.

BARRY.

The pages of the letter fell unheeded to the floor, as Wilford Langdon stared at the blossom in his hand, the crushed blossom whose bruised leaves sent out a faint fragrance which seemed to fill the room, and out of the silence, he could fancy he heard a far away voice whisper, "And there shall be no more partings."

The Makin's

BY ALBERT R. KATES

"JEM, I got a cravin'."

"So've I. I crave the companionship of my company in preference to a flounderin' round in this woods, where Dutchmen're as thick as flies and where life's an uncertain possession."

"Humph! That's not mine," grunted Tom Wiley, carefully searching through his pockets for the eighteenth time. "What I want is a cigarette or some good, old American 'makin's.' Jem, believe me, I've simply got to have one."

The little Englishman gazed at the tall, good-looking American volunteer in deep disgust. He surveyed him from his bare feet and ragged, khaki-clad body to his blood-stained, towsled head,—and then swore eloquently.

"You're a 'ell of a soldier!" he said. "'Ere you've been a-knockin' about a bloomin' forest filled with men a-dyin' to plug you; you've been subsistin' on grass, berries, an' snakes, for five days; you've been shot, scratched, bitten an' torn,—an' all that worries you is that you ain't got a cigarette to feed your imbecile cravin'."

"Oh, but the delight of sitting comfortably and puffing indolently on a cigarette, Jem, with the precious fumes exhaling from your nostrils. Gee, pal, I—"

Plunk!

A bullet skimmed past the speaker's face and buried itself in the trunk of a nearby tree. The two soldiers dropped face forward on the ground.

"Deutschland ueber alles!" came from behind a huge rock about a hundred yards away, and two more shots whistled by.

Tom and Jem crept to a place of comparative safety among a small group of trees and answered the fire. Their shots were wasted, however, for the bits of lead only flattened against the rock behind which their enemies lay concealed.

"Two of them," whispered the American. "I wonder if they've got the 'makin's' with them?"

"Shut up," commanded the other impatiently, as another shot whizzed by.

It began to rain dismally, dampening both spirits and clothing of the two soldiers. Before long they found themselves lying in a small pool of mud and water. A long string of virile, man-sized oaths, issued from the diminutive Englishman's mouth, punctuated now and then by the crack of his rifle. The American, on the other hand, was too disgusted to even swear. For perhaps the first time in his life even this form of speech deserted him. He was brooding over his longing for a cigarette. Finally he broke his melancholy silence.

"Maybe those nutty Dutchmen may have a cigarette between them," he ventured, staring into space.

"Maybe they have. Go over an' arsk 'em, if you feel like dyin'," sug-

gested the Briton sarcastically.

"That's a grand idea," chortled Tom. "I'm going to mosey over there with a little white flag in my hands and make inquiries."

Jem gazed at him sharply, thinking it one of Tom's little jokes, but the look of determination on the American's face satisfied him that the man was in earnest.

"Don't be a fool," Jem warned him. "Bloody Dutchmen don't respect a flag of truce."

"I'll take a chance," retorted Tom, defiantly.

He quickly fastened a white handkerchief to a branch, and, with this raised high above his head, set out on his perilous journey toward the rock behind which the Germans lay. The black, threatening barrel of a rifle appeared over the top of the rock and covered him, but he walked boldly on. The Germans did not shoot and Tom soon arrived at their "fort" in safety. A fair-haired, youthful German arose to greet him.

"What can I do for you?" he queried in English.

"Punk weather, isn't it?" said Tom, irrelevantly.

"Rotten," agreed the German.

"Gee, you speak 'New York,'" laughed the American in pleased surprise.

"Ten years of my life I spent in that city," the other told him. "And you are an American?"

"You've guessed right; and I'm proud of it, too," he added a bit defiantly.

Suddenly Tom Wiley's bosom filled with joy and his eyes sparkled with anticipation, for, lying temptingly on a flat stone, he beheld a bag of tobacco and cigarette papers. He beamed on the young German.

"Can I do anything for you?" reiterated the latter.

"Yes, thanks. You can earn my undying gratitude by slipping me the 'makin's' lying on that rock."

The German laughed heartily. "I appreciate your feelings," he said. He reached for the tobacco and papers and handed them to the eager American. "Call your comrade over here and we'll declare an armistice for a couple of hours while we enjoy each other's company."

Before long the American, the Englishman, and the young German, who introduced himself as Karl Stolz, were chatting together like old friends. The fourth member of the party did not join in the conversation as he couldn't speak English, but sat contentedly smoking an evil-smelling pipe, now and then addressing a brief remark to Karl in German. The four became so friendly that each loathed the thought that soon—very soon—they would be back in the firing lines, exchanging a fusillade of bullets for the friendly cigarettes.

"We'd better separate as though we'd never met," suggested the American, voicing the tacit sentiment of all.

"Suits us," agreed Karl. "Four men, more or less, can neither win nor lose a battle. It means just four more broken-hearted mothers to be added to the roll of misery and suffering, or despairing widows, that's all."

Huge draughts from the Englishman's flask cemented the agreement.

"I wish with all my heart, this barbarous war was over," Tom said sud-

denly. "I joined the English out of sympathy for their cause and of a natural love of fighting, but I'm getting damn sick of making widows and orphans; besides, there's a girl waiting for me in the good old U. S. A."

The young German smiled quietly. "I, too, have a girl waiting for me in America."

He took a picture from his coat pocket and pressed it to his lips. "This is her photograph," he said, and passed the picture with a fond smile to the American.

Tom gazed curiously at the picture. He started and his face turned white. "Who is that woman?" he demanded hoarsely, springing up.

The German gazed at him in surprise. "That is the picture of my future wife, Miss Helen Bramwell of New York." He drew himself up proudly and eyed the other with cold disdain.

"Your —— You lie!" roared Tom, beside himself with rage. "That girl is *my* promised wife."

The German, also, rose to his feet. The two soldiers glared at each other like wild animals at bay.

At last the German spoke. "There's some mistake. Do you mean to say she promised to marry us both?"

"It looks that way," confessed Tom sadly.

"She's mine. No, no! I'll not believe it. She's the soul of honor. One of us must never return."

"I get your drift," answered Tom. "We'll fight for her."

"Exactly."

"Don't be so bloomin' foolish," interrupted the Englishman. "Flip coins for her."

Tom turned upon him fiercely. "Shut up!" he commanded.

With a great effort the German regained his self-control. "Yes; one of us must die—only one can claim her," he said tragically. "I propose fighting with revolvers,—one loaded and one empty."

"That suits me."

Jem and Karl's brother German, acting in the capacity of seconds, selected two similar revolvers. With grim care they emptied one, while they made sure that every chamber of the other was full. The revolvers were then concealed beneath a cloth.

"Take your choice," said Tom.

The German quickly seized one of the pistols and Tom grasped the other. Toe to toe they stood, their revolvers pressed close against each other's forehead. For the first time Tom realized that the slender German was young—very young. Although but three or four years younger than himself, he seemed ridiculously boyish to the American adventurer, and a wave of compassion passed over him.

"He's a nice kid," thought Tom, "but damn him, he wants Helen." Grimly he closed his firm mouth; still he hesitated to pull the trigger. The cold steel of his foe's gun pressed hard against his head.

The German, too, hesitated. Then his face suddenly clouded and he pulled the trigger. Click! The gun was empty! Tom, hearing it, realized that his rival was at his mercy. Helen Bramwell was his, but at what a price! True, the duel was fair and honorable, but it was murder—cold-blooded murder—even though sanctioned by civilized codes. For a fraction of a second

he hated the German with fierce, jealous fury. But he still hesitated, his finger quivering on the trigger.

"Helen Bramwell is a siren—a double dealer," ran his thoughts. "Just a common, heartless flirt for whom I'm about to murder this boy and break some mother's heart." Tom's mind became suddenly illuminated and he saw the girl in her true light. It hurt and hurt terribly, still he would be game and bear it like a man. He shuddered slightly. "Brace up, Tom Wiley, you've got a mother, too."

"For God's sake shoot," the German pleaded. "You win—shoot."

"I was thinking," the American drawled, carelessly, "that perhaps we could make a bargain."

The German drew himself up proudly. "If you are going to ask me to give up Helen, here is my answer. While I live I shall love her; death will separate us for only a season. Kill me," he ended dramatically.

"Come, we'll make an exchange," said the American crisply, lowering his weapon. "I'll swop Helen Bramwell for those 'makin's' of yours."

The German stared at him incredulously.

"I mean it," Tom assured him, a smile playing about the corners of his mouth, for now the situation appealed strongly to his Yankee sense of humor. "I've come to the conclusion that I don't love that dame much after all. Pass me those 'makin's' and I'll give up all claim to her and consider myself mighty lucky at that. God pity the poor, blind youngster," he added under his breath.

With difficulty Tom Wiley avoided the German's embraces. Deftly he rolled a cigarette and assuming his most nonchalant manner, he linked arms with the little Englishman and strolled away.

He blew a huge cloud of smoke through his nostrils and philosophized to himself.

"I don't think I made a bad bargain at that." He was striving manfully to believe it, as he gulped down a sob. Old Kip had the right dope when he said something about a dame being only a dame, while a cigar was a good smoke.

"I'll have the cigar all right, all right, and that fool youngster 'll have Helen. Oh, well, a bargain's a bargain, and I'll—"

A shot rang out. Turning, he saw the young German fall.

Tom stood bareheaded, awe-stricken, marvelling at the strangeness of Fate.

And far away in the dear old U. S. A. a girl is waiting.

Run Amuck

BY MAUDE NEWBEGIN

CRUCIBLE was awake, or rather that part which slept was awake—the town as a whole, never slept. Men straggled along their various ways toward the ovens and the mines—a polyglot mass of men: squat, muscular Hungarians, heavy-faced Russians and lithe, quick-eyed Italians. The rising flames from the two long lines of coke ovens burned palely in the bright morning light. Loaded cars of coal started up the tipples, and the empty cars going down were swallowed up in the mines' yawning black mouths.

At the doors of the company houses, which stood in monotonous rows like the stilted arrangement of a toy village, women appeared—barefooted women with babies on their arms; and barefooted children swarmed out into the road.

A squarely-built young Hungarian with a dinner-pail on his arm, shambled out of one of the houses and started off down the brick road that began to blaze hot under the summer sun. He had gone but a few paces when a bright-clad little figure dashed out of the next house and danced tantalizingly before him.

"Look, John, look!" she cried, raising her short skirts a trifle higher and pointing happily to her white-stockinged ankles, and her feet encased in heavy, black strapped slippers. "I go barefoot no more—I woman now. Soon, my hair." She grasped the thick yellow braid which hung down her strong young back and twisted it around her head to illustrate that she would soon wear it up. "See!"

She made a pretty, vainglorious picture, the little Slav girl, as she strutted along beside him and the man gaped at her, lost in admiring wonder.

"It is the little Sophy a woman grown," he declared in Hungarian.

But she shook her yellow head disapprovingly. "I no understand. Spik English!" she commanded wilfully.

"How old you, Sophy?"

"Seventeen!" proudly.

"You go with me tonight, Sophy, car ride?"

"Yes," she consented eagerly.

Just at that moment they came to where recent heavy rains had caused a washout by the side of the road. Sophy in her excitement and the slippery awkwardness of her new shoes, caught her foot and lurched forward. The man quickly flung out his hand to save her. She reached for the hand but missed and slipped down into the black dust of the washout.

He stooped and lifted her up, setting her stumbling feet once more on the safety of the bricks. She looked a bit rueful as she tried to brush off the dirt which sullied the glory of her new finery, then—her gayety restored—she turned from him with a smiling, "Good-bye, John."

"Good-bye, Sophy."

His dog-brown eyes followed her as she danced away toward an interested neighbor who wanted to see the new slippers and stockings.

He made his way to the ovens, where, stripped to trowers and shirt, he drew out the white-hot coke. And as he worked, inured to the scorching heat, he saw ever a gaily dressed little figure with a thick yellow braid, proudly displaying her first permanent pair of shoes.

The smoke from the ovens curled lazily upward in the warm summer sky, and tips of orange flame illumined the darkness as the ecstatic young Hungarian and the laughing, chattering girl, started off that evening on the promised outing. On the steps of the company houses groups of friends and neighbors nodded and smiled significantly as they passed. "Sophy is a woman," they said; "it is right that she should marry. John is steady and good. She is a lucky girl."

But to blithesome Sophy, John's enduring qualities were matters of little moment. He was not so handsome as he might have been, but he admired her. That was enough for the happiness of the present.

She enjoyed the car ride, and sat looking out into the soft darkness, the night wind blowing in her face. John's arm over the back of the seat, close to her shoulders, gave her a pleasurable sensation.

As he bade her good-night, she wished that he would kiss her, but he only looked at her with reverent shyness. She seemed very wonderful to him; he would not have dared to kiss her.

That car ride was only the first. Sophy twisted up her braid and lengthened her skirts; and John, with fast-beating heart, turned into the house next door almost every night and took her off every Sunday.

The first time they rode out to a pleasure park, the smooth floor and rollicking music called alluringly to the girl. She beat her slippered foot impatiently, but John had to confess that he could not dance. When she showed her disgust unmistakably and coaxed him to try, he bravely made the attempt, but his heaviness of foot quickly brought them to grief. Sophy flounced off the floor while he meekly followed.

The weeks went by with many excursions to mark their passing, but he never attempted to kiss her. Other young foreigners, or "hunkies" in the vernacular of the coal country, were observing Sophy, and she was beginning to hold John somewhat in contempt. But he had not failed to notice the admiring glances of his fellow-workers. When he strolled with her past the company store, she preened and coquetted, and he was bitten by a burning jealousy.

So out of his fear of losing her sprang courage at last. "I—I lov' you —Sophy," he stammered one night.

She laughed, a maddening little laugh, and bent her yellow head close to his. "I—I know, John," she mocked.

At that he took her in his arms and kissed her; and she lay there throbbing in blissful young response to passion.

"You—you marry me, Sophy?" he dared to whisper.

"Maybe—some day."

"Soon, Sophy," he urged.

"Where we live?" she parried.

"I have money in bank; I get company house."

"We take boarder?" she questioned.

"No boarder—'less you say, Sophy," he agreed readily.

"I don' know; maybe I like boarder."

"You marry me soon, Sophy?"

"Maybe—some day," was the nearest to a promise that he could get; but she allowed him many kisses at parting.

The next morning his pail was not ready. "The baby, seeck," explained his voluble landlady with many protestations of regret. "I send Sophy —yes?" And he hurried off, delight in his heart that she would bring his dinner.

Arrived at the ovens, he found a new foreman, a lithe, low-browed Italian. John was a man of slow dislikes, but he felt an instant distrust of the newcomer. The day was hot and oppressive; the sky lowering; the smoke hanging low. Sweat poured off the men's reeking bodies as they fed the hungry red maws of the huge ovens. The Italian was bullying, cursing the laggards, urging them on to greater effort. At the sound of the noon whistle, spent with weariness and the heat, they dropped down and opened their pails.

Along the road came Sophy, a gay little person, clean and cool. John went to meet her, his whole body atremble at the memory of the night before, when he had held her in his arms and had dared to kiss her. She calmly handed him the pail, no trace of embarrassment in her provocatively-smiling face.

"It good to see you, Sophy," he mumbled. "You no forget; you marry me, someday."

"Maybe—"

A shadow loomed back of them. "Your seester, John?"

They both turned to meet the bold black eyes of the new foreman. His teeth showed in an ingratiating smile.

"No sister," the girl denied. "I, Sophy Shadek." She met the bold eyes saucily.

"Lucky dog, you, John," laughed the Italian, but he gave the girl a meaning glance as he slouched away.

"He handsome man," said Sophy.

"He bad man, I know," asserted John, making his first mistake in the fire of his pain.

"How you know?" she retorted hotly. "Go eat dinner—I go home."

"Sophy!"

"No! You crazy jealous. I no marry you."

As through a mist he saw her toss her head and trip away. He heard the foreman call her name softly yet boldly. He saw her stop and simper as she brought forth all her little tricks of coquetry.

And that night he did not turn into the house next door for the Italian went in before he could muster courage to brave her flippant anger. The two came out and passed down the road, while John huddled miserably out of sight in the darkness, listening to her merry little laugh as it floated back to him. On the steps of the company houses groups of friends and neighbors conjectured and shook their heads in disapproval as Sophy and her new admirer passed. The fire from the ovens flared fitfully and the low-hanging smoke soon hid them.

John tried to make his peace at his earliest opportunity, but the girl flouted him shamefully. "I no go with you, now," she shrilled. "I go with Tony. He dance grand."

"He no good for you, Sophy," the man protested miserably, making his second mistake.

"You jealous," she jibed. "I no listen."

The days and nights became one ceaseless torture to John—days under the petty tyrannies and insults of the sneering foreman; nights when he sat by and watched the two saunter off together: Sophy cheaply daring, the Italian crowding close to her in easy familiarity.

But by the end of summer, Crucible knew him no more. There were other ovens, and work to be had. He fled to escape what he had come to feel he could not endure.

Fall and winter went their round, and spring blossomed bravely as best it could in the coal fields, choked with smoke and grime.

"He's some worker, that hunky!" John heard the words, but they roused no feeling of pride. Work until he was forced to sleep from sheer exhaustion was all he asked of life, for when there was no work and no sleep, there was ever the picture of Sophy as he had dreamed—Sophy busy in one of the cozy little company houses; but it was not he who came in at the door, who caught her up and held her.

As the two men passed on, the other started to speak. The Hungarian straightened his bent, toiling body, dashed the sweat from his eyes with his blackened hand and gazed after the supple, catlike figure he knew so well.

That night he sought him out. Something had flashed into his dull mind at first sight of the Italian—some presentiment of evil. His every thought, like the stars in their courses around a planet, revolved around Sophy. What was the meaning of the man seeking work outside of Crucible?

When he found him, he blurted out: "What you do here?"

"Ah, eet ees John," greeted the other jovially.

"What you do her?" persisted the Hungarian doggedly.

Fire flashed into the bold black eyes, but there was a certain uneasiness back of it. "What that to you? D—— you!" the Italian shouted in entire change of manner. "I work!"

"An' Sophy? She with you?"

"Sophy!" The sneer in the hateful voice was unmistakable.

"Yes, Sophy!" The hunky took a step forward.

The other backed at the quiet menace in the dog-brown eyes. "Ah—Sophy, you say?" He threw out his hands deprecatingly. "She would not come."

"Perhaps—you lie. I know soon!" was the only answer, as the Hungarian turned on his heel and walked away.

The following day was Sunday. With a decision of action that was new-born, John took the first train for Crucible. His old friends greeted him as he made his way along the familiar road. His voluble landlady welcomed him even more volubly. But he found that he could not ask one

of them of Sophy, and because they evidently avoided any mention of her name, he understood that his half-formed fears were built on facts.

When finally he came face to face with the girl, the sodden shame and misery of her struck him like a physical blow. He clutched the cement wall for support. Her pretty, coquettish little face was drained of color, drained of brightness, drained of youth itself. The thick yellow braid coiled around her head seemed dank and lusterless. The dancing little figure—!

Speechless he gazed at her, a burning ache in his heart for her suffering. He noticed too, that as further badge of her shame and dependence, she was barefoot—she who had scorned to go barefoot once she possessed shoes. The first day when she had blossomed forth so vividly as a woman came poignantly before him. As if she read something of what was passing in his mind, she raised her hands to cover her poor face and whimpered like a beaten cur. For life had beaten her—gay, shallow, heedless Sophy.

The man drew a long, sighing breath, and drawing nearer, he placed his hand awkwardly on the downbent head. "Sophy—" he choked.

She shrank back almost as if he had struck her.

"He mus' marry you, soon," John said.

"What?"

"I say—he mus' marry you."

"He no do that—he laugh," she stammered.

"I make him marry you."

Suddenly her head was on his shoulder and she had given way to a very passion of weeping. He held her silently, realizing, somehow, that her outburst would bring relief.

"I want die, John, I no can live," she sobbed. She nodded toward the house. "They hate me—hate my baby when it come. I want die."

He comforted her as best he could saying, over and over, "Don' you worry, Sophy, I make him marry you."

When he left her, a little of the old sparkle gleamed momentarily in her eyes as she smiled up at him through her tears. As he turned away, he heard her name called shrilly. With drooping shoulders and lagging step, she entered the house.

A short time later, he went to the kindly woman whose boarder he had been for so many months. In his hand was a well-thumbed bank-book. He opened the book and below the last entry he pointed to a sentence he had penned with much labor. "When I die this all go free to Sophy Shadek," she read slowly.

"Yes," he nodded, "that right. Now my name." He wrote carefully. "So."

Her husband had slouched in and stood peering over John's shoulder. When the signature was finished, John handed them the pen in turn. "You write—so," he directed.

And when both had signed, he handed the book to the woman with the simple remark: "You keep for her—maybe she need it, some day."

They shook their heads pityingly as he left them. "She not good enough for him," the woman muttered, with the merciless judgment of her sex. Her husband nodded agreement.

Crucible never saw John again.

That night he found the Italian who had been made foreman of a night

shift. He strode up to the man and spoke with slow directness: "You mus' marry Sophy."

The other turned on him with a snarl and a foul oath. "Marry Sophy," he roared, "never! She light woman!"

The hunky's short muscular hands clenched at his sides. "You marry Sophy—or I kill you!" The tones of his voice never lifted.

"Kill me-e!" The Italian smote his chest. "That good! Ha-ha!"

In the light of the ovens their figures stood out boldly—the one, thick and powerful; the other, slim, almost feline. The workmen drew near—watching, listening—thirsting for a fight.

"Again, I say—you márry her!"

"No!" was the derisive retort, followed by another oath.

"Then I *kill* you!" spat out the Hungarian.

He sprang forward and grasped the other man, but Tony was quick—a knife flashed in his hand. There was a warning shout from the onlookers. John caught the Italian's wrist as the gleaming blade swept down and grazed his shoulder. Blood spread in a crimson stain over his shirt. Tony cursed with pain as he felt the iron grip on his wrist, and the knife clattered to the ground. He broke from the other man's hold.

Back and forth the two raged in what the gaping hunkies, who watched them avidly, sensed would be a death struggle. What advantage John had in size and strength, the other made up in agility. The Hungarian aimed sledgehammer blows toward his opponent, but very few reached their mark as, with snake-like quickness, the Italian slid from under the huge hand.

But after a time, it could be seen that Tony's endurance was wearing—he breathed heavily. He dodged a smashing blow from the right fist, only to be caught unaware, squarely in the face, with the left. The two men locked. As they writhed and twisted in the red flare of the ovens, tearing up the cinders under their heavy boots, the sweat pouring from their bodies and running in rivulets down their soot-grimed faces, they might have stood as models for a Rodin group; they might have been called forth from another Inferno.

The Italian was growing weaker; mortal terror burned livid in his black eyes. John's right arm swiftly upflung, caught him across the chest, gripping his right shoulder, forcing up his chin. Tony clawed madly, but the powerful left arm encircled his back, pinioning his hands. The Hungarian forced him over backward, slowly, inexorably.

There was a sickening crack of breaking bone. He ceased to struggle. The limp form of the Italian slipped from the crushing hold to the ground.

The watching men rushed to him and lifted him, but he fell from their hands, a battered, spineless, lifeless thing.

"He's dead!" The whisper flew from mouth to mouth. They gazed awestricken at the panting, sweating victor, standing over that which he had robbed of life. He made no attempt to escape.

There was a shout from the direction of the mine. Several men were running toward the tragic group. One, a little in advance of the others, who

appeared to have some authority, reached the Hungarian first. He laid a heavy hand on the spent man's shoulder.

"You'll swing for this!" he thundered.

Suddenly John seemed galvanized into life. He broke from the man's hold and dashed away, a mob instantly at his heels. He ran the length of the line of blazing ovens, then turned and scrambled up a heap of cinder waste. His pursuers stopped a moment in surprise. He jumped from the mound of waste to the first one of the line of ovens. He stood for an instant poised on the brink of the seething, man-made volcano, from which belched hissing flame and sulphurous smoke.

The men beneath him gazed upward, spellbound, as he balanced there, a half-naked, blood-stained figure of primitive vengeance, silhouetted against the murky sky in which appeared the first faint streaks of dawn. Then, with a weird, guttural cry, he flung up his arms and leaped into the flaming, white-hot heap of coke below.

And the company's books recorded: "A hunky run amuck."

The Happy-go-lucky Street Car

BY MARK HARMON

LUCY LOU was standing on the corner, or, to be accurate, a country cross-roads, waiting for a car;—almost an outing to a girl who *had* known better times but who was now forced to work the livelong week in the darkest recess of a department store basement.

All day, from Monday morning to Saturday noon, she stepped briskly back and forth before the tiers of shining pneumatic tubes in the cashier's office,—pneumatic tubes that went slap-chug, slap-chug,—glimmering brassily under the glare of the electric light. Alderson Brothers paid her five dollars every Saturday noon for this service. Saturday night she turned over three dollars and fifty cents to the Superintendent of the Young Ladies' Home Club, which left a dollar and a half for clothes and recreation. This last need had been shamefully neglected, but on this spring Saturday, having taken the place of a girl from the millinery, who had been overwhelmed with orders, she found herself far out indeed, the hat deposited at the very last house, and she, herself, waiting for a car that would take her back to town.

It was good to be here in the country. Far and away to the west were the careless rows of foothills—twenty miles, but apparently within what city folks call short walking distance. Behind them, another step or two, the snowcaps. Nearer, the miles and miles of yellow and green and maroon valleys, house-dotted here and yonder. The street railway slid down a lengthy slope, becoming a mere line, extending into nothingness. Lucy Lou threw back her head and breathed deeply. She was more than pretty—black haired, blue-eyed, unstudied, unspoiled, her color not too vivid.

"I wonder where this car goes?" she speculated, staring at a stolid and matronly cow who was regarding her from an enclosure opposite. "I just feel like finding out. Surely it must be to that bit of a town away over there. At least, I suppose it's a town. There's a church and one, two, three—four houses that I can see. Oh, I don't care; I'm going there and back, wherever the car goes. I've the half dollar I've been saving. I only hope it's the longest way. It's such a dear today and the breezes—they just talk and talk of growing things. Here comes the car now. How funny! The motorman hasn't any uniform. I daresay they aren't particular about uniforms on these country lines."

The car came nearer. Lucy Lou swung her shopping bag to be sure he'd know she wanted to get aboard. He was a good-looking young man—that motorman. He seemed to be tugging hard at something. When very near he called to her through the open front window.

"I can't quite stop," anxiously, "this

thing won't work right. I—" Then the side of the car slid in front of Lucy Lou's nose and the step came along. Instinctively she caught at her skirt with one hand and reached up with the other. Next instant she was aboard.

There didn't seem to be any conductor and she was absolutely the only passenger. She glanced forward doubtfully. The door into the motorman's compartment was wide. Lucy Lou liked the young man's face—the glimpse she had of it—and now she admired his broad shoulders. It seemed lonely;—no passenger but herself, and the green fields stretching for miles and miles without a sign of life—not even a robin. She went forward hesitantly to the very front seat and sat down,—a small, demure figure. If her gloves *were* shabby the smile on her warm lips was sweet and sound. If her low shoes *were* scuffed, her ankles put them out of thought.

Presently that odd motorman half turned in her direction, still clinging to the obstreperous handle. He had gentle gray eyes wherein lurked a twinkle.

"Where were you going?" he inquired deferentially.

"I—I don't know."

"Huh?" he ejaculated, amazed.

"Out a ways," amended the passenger uncertainly. "Where does this line end?"

"I've no idea," said this strangest of motormen; "I've been wondering that myself. I'm glad you managed to hop on. It's a heap pleasanter to have company."

This was scraping acquaintance too openly.

"I think I'll get off at the next regular stop," said Lucy Lou with reserve, "and go back to town. How much is the fare, please? Where is the conductor?"

"There isn't any. I don't know what they charge for this distance—no more'n that rabbit."

"I'll put ten cents on the window sill," declared the young lady. She did so, then sat looking out absorbedly for the best part of a minute. The motorman was ringing the gong violently, the rabbit he had pointed out had left the field and was bouncing along down the track, ahead of the car, impudently—not to say imprudently. Presently, he took a side leap into some bushes.

"It's this way," the young man explained abruptly; "Shelton's my name—Richard Shelton. I ran out with a fellow in an auto to the big wheel works back there. Had business. When I got through I came down to the gates, and there were two or three of these dinky cars on a siding. They run only one car on this line except in the rush hours night and morning. I'd barely missed the down car, so I climbed into this one to have a smoke and put in the time. There was an old wrench and I got to monkeying with this controller thing. Somehow, I got it to going and, first thing I knew, I was through the switch—outbound, and I couldn't get it stopped. This handbrake tightens up about so far, then slips a cog or something."

"I'll go and pull down the trolley for you," proposed Lucy Lou, assuming an air of wisdom. "I suppose you never thought of that."

Mr. Shelton shook his head dolefully.

"They've been messing with that, too," he said; "the rope's trailing off above. I was going to climb up from the rear—there's steps and handholds—and pull the pole away by hand, but I couldn't let go this brake. It's all down grade, and it'd be a runaway in a minute. But as soon as we get past this hill we're coming to, I'll show you how to hold it, if you don't mind. I'm glad you came. We can be friends for the trip, can't we? It won't last long, worse luck."

"I—I suppose so," she stammered. A great shyness came over her at something in his eyes; something she had never known before. She had led a lonely life during her twenty years. "Won't you tell me your name?" the young man was begging. "You know mine, so it's only fair."

"Lucy Lou Desmond," yielded his passenger, flushing from brow to throat. It came out involuntarily.

Shelton had no time for further conversation at the moment for the car was squealing around a turn. In fact, if he had not been so intent upon his passenger, he might have noticed the rattle-rattle-bang of the automatic switch they had passed a little while before. The rails ahead were older now—not so shiny and bright. Trees and bushes crowded close. Somewhere sounded the ripple of water among pebbles.

"Gee!" announced the self-made motorman, "I'm glad we're to the flat country at last. If you'll come here a minute and hold this handle—so; put your weight on; that's it. Hold tight. I'll be up on top in two shakes."

He said the last words from the rear window. Climbing through he tested footholds gingerly. Lucy Lou tugged at the brake as she watched him vanish. Almost instantly they came to a jerky, clattering stop with a petulant rattling of windows.

"Hooray!" cried Shelton, reappearing, triumphant. "Now me for the flagman act. I'll go around that last bend and put my hanky on a tall pole in the middle of the track with a note to look out for us. Be back in ten minutes."

"I'll go along," volunteered Lucy Lou. So they went together and after putting up the signal, returned slowly, loiteringly, to the car.

"Isn't it beautiful?" said the girl sighing. "I don't care if we do have to stay for a while."

"Let's go over under that big tree," proposed Shelton. "It'll be quite a wait. Here's my coat for a cushion. All we need is a picnic basket. Isn't it the greatest day?" he concluded happily.

They were in a fragrant corner of the world. The connecting link with town and its troubles was hidden from view by an immense clump of chokecherry bushes. They could hear the brook talking and laughing. It had heard a good story up meadow and was telling it to the pussy willows. There was a fragment of blue sky and a flowered hill. The sun came through an opening in the tree above and made a patch of grateful warmth.

They talked of many things. He told her that he was going away that very night—far, far out of her world. Lucy Lou Desmond, little orphan that she was, had not very much to tell in

return and she was soberly wistful in the telling. Afterward they got along to the silences, just a word now and then, and a look.

Some fairy, long ago, must have been brewing drowsy spells and love potions in this place—must have let them boil over.

Shelton looked at his watch at last and got up hastily, extending a helping hand.

"Wonder what's wrong?" he said surprisedly. "Breakdown—it must be. We've been here two hours; have to get busy and do something. It doesn't seem a minute, does it?"

"No," replied the girl. She was lovely, standing there in the mellow afternoon. Shelton trembled. A great, impulsive resolution possessed him.

"Lucy Lou!" he said. "Dear, I love you! I knew it when I first saw you waiting up there—waiting for me, dear. It must be years. I've known you—dreamed of you—all my life—my girl—my dear, my dear."

The dark head rested against his arm for a moment. It was answer enough. Then she pushed away from him in shamed confusion.

"We must go. We must!" she murmured hastily. "Don't! You mustn't! Mercy—it will be night—time for your train! Oh, do you really have to go away? What was I saying! Of course—you do—more than ever—now. The last word brought a quick kiss.

A voice broke in upon them—two voices in fact. Some one was over by the street car. They hurried through the trees.

A tall man was looking meditatively at the car, occasionally stooping to inspect the wheels in such fashion that "Whoa ther!" might well have matched the action. He had peaceful, brown eyes and a peaceful, drooping brown mustache. He wore a Prince Albert coat and his necktie was bright red. The brim of his straw hat was very narrow.

His companion was short and fat.—a sputtering specimen. His white shirt had a gemmed collar button but no collar, and he oozed out all around his waist line, for his vest was hardly on speaking terms with his trousers. His short gray beard was quivering excitedly.

"You know anything about this street car?" he demanded of the couple. "Me'n Harv' jes' found her here. This 's Mr. Harv' Peters. I'm Judge William Hoop. Harv's County Clerk over t' Afton. I'm Justice o' Peace there. Harv' had to go into the city t' git some blanks printed. Goin' to be some weddin's our way an' Harv' only had two licenses left. He brung 'em along fer samples. We cut cross lots. My farm joins his'n. We come down through here t' see if we c'ud see that ornery red calf o' mine—an' here's this car. They only use this track through the bottom timber once a day—'nough to keep their dummed franchise. It hitches to the new line up above. An' now, Harv', we've *missed* that down car standin' here gabbin'. Harv', ye have! An' t' wait fer another'll keep ye fr'm gittin' the printin' done today. An' ye *know* ye ain't got but them two licenses in your pocket an' me dependin' on that double weddin' fr'm Nodaway an' that other one fr'm home to tide me over. Three dollars is three dollars!"

The county clerk of Afton said nothing. There was an instant's lull in which Shelton put forth the main facts of the case.

"Y' don't tell me!" commented the Judge, more excited than ever. "Now I'd like to know what's to hinder—so long as you c'n run the car so handy—what's to hinder ye turnin' the trolley round an' takin' Harv' an' me down town? Why,—the company'll be *obliged*. An' Harv' c'n get the printin' done. Money's money these days, I tell ye. Weddin's ain't picked up every whichway. I'll get two dollars, anyways, from them Nodaway folks tomorrow."

Shelton was not heeding. He was whispering.

"Lucy Lou," he breathed, "they can marry us, dear. Let's let them—right here under this tree where I told you I loved you. After—we'll take time to get things together and catch the train. Say you will—say it!"

Lucy Lou flushed and faltered. Then her head came up bravely, trustfully.

"Yes," she said, "I will, if you're sure, oh, if you're sure—"

"Y' don't tell me," cried Judge William Hoop benevolently, a moment later. "I sh'd say so. Harv's county clerk an' he can be best man an' witness easy 'nogh. One witness is legal all right. No need t' worry 'bout that. We'll put in Cy McCue as t'other. He's workin' f'r me in the south pasture. Let Harv' hev thet fountain pen, Mister Shelton. Fill in one of your licenses, Harv'. Ye can put your fixin's on tomorrow an' make the office record jibe. Jest git the names an' so on. My, but you write slow, Harv'! Now, if you'll join hands—"

The bridegroom tinkered long and earnestly with the old wrench, getting the controller reversed for the return. Finally, the car started ploddingly up the purpling hills. There would be no need of brakes for a good while. He came and sat in the front seat, close to—somebody.

"It's my wedding journey," whispered the girl to herself—"my wedding journey."

"I tell ye," Judge William Hoop's voice floated up from a rear seat, "I tell ye thet this car bein' down there was a fortnit thing fer us, Harv' Peters. We couldn't hev got yer printin' done, else. An' I wouldn't hev missed them couples from Nodaway tomorrow; not to speak of this weddin' today. I'm glad we cut across."

"So am I," averred the county clerk of Afton.

"So am I," murmured Shelton in quiet earnest.

A warm little hand came into his.

"So am I," said Lucy Lou.

An Eye For a Tooth

BY ALBERT W. TOLMAN

HEN Festus Carey burst upon Chili, he had burned his bridges behind him by losing his return fare at poker on the Valparaiso steamer. His sole assets, on arrival at Santiago, consisted of his tongue, his face and a suitcase full of bricks.

Nevertheless, he whistled blithely, as he walked along the Plaza. What cared he for mere money? His tongue was a sliver of the original blarney stone. As for his face, his friend Ben Greenhow, who knew Greek mythology, had always insisted that, if Apollo had been red-haired, he would have been almost as good-looking as Festus. To crown all, were not the bricks in his suit-case steel-engraved in three colors and of the purest gold?

How could any stock-and-bond salesman desire more! Festus promptly engaged the best room in the Hotel de Francia and started in breaking hearts and bank accounts.

Now people who inhabit glass houses should not throw brickbats. Bachelors with breakable hearts should not engage lightly in heart-breaking. The first shy glance from Carmen Montijo's purple eyes rocked Festus's heart to its foundation; the second cracked it innumerably from centre to circumference; and the third smashed it to smithereens. Festus was unable to retain even these smithereens; Carmen had them all in her collection, properly labeled. He did not want his heart again; but he wanted Carmen's instead. In that respect he agreed with sundry native swains, notably Don José Carafa.

Just about that time the *Alcarzar* incident set Señor Chili and Uncle Sam reaching back for their pistol-pockets. Santiago boiled with patriotism. It knocked the bottom out of the market for American bricks. Even Festus could not sell any. A Yankee was as popular as a wasp in a hornets' nest. Everybody who could, struck for the States. Festus lingered. How could he go, when he had a vacuum in his left breast! Carmen would not give his heart back; at any rate, he had not the courage to ask for it. What should he do?

He argued it out with himself, as he stood shaving that night in his room at the Francia. Said Festus:

"If I go, Don José 'll get Carmen."

Replied Carey:

"If you stay, some coffee-colored don 'll get you."

"Go quick!" said his New York.

"Stay to the finish!" commanded his Irish. Without even the informality of tossing a cent, Festus decided.

"Stay it is!"

Outside his window the Chilian national anthem blared truculently from a passing band.

Dulce patria, recibe los votos,
Con que Chile en tus aras juro.

Festus had one rosy cheek scraped clean, when—*psst!*—the mirror spattered into a million fragments. A pile-driver smote him in the jaw. He clapped his free hand to his mouth: a front tooth had been broken. He fingered the fracture ruefully.

"I knew I was homely, but not so bad as to smash a glass."

Stooping, he picked up the flattened, leaden slug that had marred his beauty by its rebound from the stone wall. Exactly over the dint he hung a small hand mirror and again lifted his razor.

"Try another shot, you chocolate-livered two-spot, and see if you can't do a better job."

After all, the shot had not been so bad. The bullet had fanned his jaw. A half-inch to the right and it would have smashed something besides glass. Back there in the dark street a brace of villainous eyes might be sighting again and a cigarette-yellowed finger twitching on the trigger. Festus finished shaving; but an odd cramp plucked occasionally at the nape of his neck.

Where should he go that night? The hostile music, the murderous shot, had set the blood running hotly in his veins.

"Me for the Pacific Club!"

He stuck two carnations, the color of Carmen's eyes, jauntily in his left button-hole. On his right lapel he pinned a tiny American flag. Slipping a loaded revolver into his pocket, he strode down through the hotel office and out upon the Plaza, whistling "Yankee Doodle."

Under an empurpled, star-glorious sky that somehow reminded him of Carmen, through thronged streets where the very air seemed aflame with "Dulce Patria," Carey came to the palm-set portal of the Pacific Club. The reception committee were as glad to see him as the custodians of a powder magazine would be to admit a lunatic with a lighted torch.

It was a hot night; yet a chill struck Carey's vitals the moment he passed the carved door. He was reminded of a cold-storage plant he had once visited in mid-summer in linen suit and straw hat.

Festus was not easily disheartened. He determined to break the ice with somebody.

"Fine night, Don Luis," remarked he to a mahogany-visaged señor.

"A-umph!" Don Luis achieved an excellent imitation of a bulldog disturbed from his bone. Evidently conversation was not his long suit that evening.

"You to the bench!" growled Festus under his breath. He turned to another acquaintance.

"Think you'll push that spur track into Orocibo this season, Don Felipe?"

"Mm-r-r-rmm!" Don Felipe's cordiality matched that of Don Luis.

Mentally consigning him to a warmer place than the bench, Festus joined a group of young bloods, chatting and laughing near by. At the first break he launched a funny story. Carey's stories were famous in Santiago; but somehow this one bounded off his hearers like birdshot off armor-plate. Nobody laughed but himself. Soon the group disintegrated.

So it went. Whenever he approached, conversation died, knot after knot dispersed. He had a rare chance to see what good work San-

tiago tailors could do on their customers' backs. His broken tooth was twinging just enough to make him feel ugly.

Along came a band thundering "Dulce Patria." The club crowded the windows and hurled back volleys of *vivas*.

Carey noted a contemptuous jerk of Don Jerman Agostino's thumb. He caught a dagger glance from Señor Federico Ramos. His pride was pricked by an innuendo, hissed beneath little Ricardo Vera's needle-pointed moustache. Bah! what was the use of noticing such things? He knew nothing personal was intended.

Smiling defiantly, he determined to stay it out. Nobody would play poker with him; nobody would smoke; nobody would drink. They shunned him like a leper.

In sauntered Carmen's youngest brother.

"Hi, Juan!" hailed Carey breezily. "Have something with me!"

Juan scowled, reddened, muttered, turned his back like everybody else. Festus's choler rose. He almost said something, but bit it off just in time. How could he fight with a fellow who had Carmen's wondrous eyes! But let anybody else beware.

Moodily he drank alone, once, twice, thrice. As the liquor filtered up into his brain, his temper snapped its tether. He began muttering to himself.

"Chili and Uncle Sam! Bah! A couple of warships flying the Stars and Stripes off Valparaiso—"

Solitaire grew tiresome. He forced his patriotism on others. When those whom he accosted turned away without replying, he became almost abusive. His hearers only smiled. The American señor was forgetting himself; rather, he had thrown aside the cloak and was revealing his true nature. Their disdain made him furious.

He drifted out into the billiard room. Don José Carafa was playing pool with Lieutenant Emilio Castelar. Carey lounged over the green cloth, making free comments. José bungled an easy shot.

"Good work, José!" applauded Festus ironically; but the two contestants were blind and deaf.

Festus took their disregard as a direct insult. He pondered. Should he tweak Don José's nose or tread on the toes of the lieutenant? Neither. It savored of murder to provoke a duel with José and of suicide to embroil himself with Emilio.

"One moment, señor!"

Two taloned fingers tapped his shoulder peremptorily. Festus knew in a flash that their owner was looking for trouble. He whirled quickly and encountered a swarthy, sneering face.

It belonged to a well-dressed, medium-built stranger of about forty. He wore a heavy black beard and blue glasses adorned his hook nose.

"The Señor Yankee plays the billiards, no?"

The patronizing tone stung Carey sober.

"A little," was his curt reply.

"I am Don Ramon de Volturo," proclaimed Blackbeard pompously. "Will the Señor Carey condescend to squander his skill on an unworthy Chilian? Possibly the señor may discover that others besides those of his own blood can handle a cue."

"I'll take you on for a game or two," conceded Festus.

Don Ramon rose dramatically upon his tiptoes.

"Let us play then! Chilian against Yankee! And for money? No! Friends play for money. And we are not friends. No!"

He paused and looked about. Everybody was listening.

"Name the stakes," snapped Festus.

Don Ramon's pose became more exaggerated.

"The señor would fight for his own good name, his country's honor, yes? Wounds from sword or bullet are soon healed; and even if death come, it is speedy, painless. But real pain, real peril—ah! Would the señor stake a hand and perchance go through life maimed; or a foot, and risk becoming a cripple; or an eye, and spend the balance of his years half-blind? Yet there are men of Spanish blood who would count these things light as compared with honor."

Spontaneous applause broke from the listeners. *Viva! Caramba!* Shades of O'Higgins! Don Ramon choked, flung out his arms impulsively.

"The señor is good at boasting. Now let him make his boasts good! I challenge him. On this table we will fight a real duel, hand to hand, brain to brain, eye to eye. And the stake? Hah! Let us set it high. My right eye against his! Loser's to be removed and presented to the victor. What says the brave American?"

Sobered by this unexpected proposition, Festus hesitated. Thrusting his face close to the American's, Don Ramon hissed:

"Let the señor accept, or forever be branded as a coward who dared not make good the lying boasts that fell from his tongue."

José Carafa's beardless lips smiled a low word to Castelar and the lieutenant chuckled. Volcanic passion surged over Carey's inflamed brain. If bluffed by this ranting braggart, he would become the laughing stock of Santiago.

"Done!" he cried.

"*Bueno!*" exclaimed his challenger with grim satisfaction. "We will play a game that shall never be forgotten in Santiago."

Now Festus had as yet found no Chilian who could beat him at billiards. Moreover, he was young and self-confident, the liquor was in his brain, and he was very, very angry. Compared with his wounded pride, his country's honor, what was an eye! Pooh! A mere bagatelle, a trifle inconsiderable!

"I propose," said Blackbeard, "that the secretary of the club, Don Carlos Sanchez, act as referee."

Carey nodded. Stern old Don Carlos knit his frosty brows.

"I do not like this wager. If either man wishes to withdraw before I accept, the way is still open."

The two glared at each other in silence. Don Carlos resumed.

"Very well. I will act as referee. You both clearly understand and agree that the loser's eye is to be removed and presented to the winner. The terms will be strictly enforced."

"*Bueno!*" ejaculated Don Ramon again; but a shadow crossed his sinister face. The secretary's cold words made Festus likewise uncomfortable. He felt sure of winning. Of course he would not claim Don Ramon's eye,

but he would teach him a wholesome lesson. Yet if some unlucky chance should give the Chilian the game—! A chill ran down Festus's spine.

Something besides his eye was at stake. Carmen also hung upon the issue. A one-eyed lover! Bah! It was too ridiculous. What a fool he had been!

With polar politeness somebody handed him a cue, or was it an icicle? The game began.

Never had such a wager been laid in Santiago. Soon the billiard room was crowded. A double row of dons and señors in evening dress, short and tall, fat and thin, old and young, surrounded the table. The faces of the second rank peered between those of the first. Spiky beards bristled. White teeth, grinning under pointed moustaches, gripped smoking cigars and cigarettes. Hostile eyes glared from under crowns bald, or sleek, or bushy, black, or gray, or white.

It was a gallery to dismay an expert. And all were against Carey, every one, even Juan.

Festus felt as stiff and angular as a jumping Jack. His arm jerked like a hunter's with buck fever. His knees wobbled. His soles were heavy as lead.

Not so Don Ramon. He played easily, coldly, undisturbed by the crowd. An eye more or less? What mattered it to a man of forty who wore blue glasses and was not in love with Carmen!

Moreover, Carey had to confess that in skill his opponent was fully his equal, if not his superior. Blackbeard had dropped his bombastic manner and was forging rapidly ahead. What if he were a professional who had goaded the hotheaded American into a wager that could have but one result!

At first Spanish politeness gave Festus all the applause. Whenever he scored an easy shot, they applauded like mad, Don José especially.

Dios! What an eye! What precision! Admirable! Magnificent! Marvelous!

Soon, however, they dropped the mask. Heads shook sidewise at his good strokes, nodded approval when he missed. The older brains, liquor-proof, kept silent; but the younger tongues, loosened by *aguadiente*, began wagging.

Low words of triumph ran round the table when his opponent scored. *Ah-h-h! Car-r-ram-mba! Bravo*, Don Ramon! A good shot, that! Let the American señor match it, if he cared for his eye. But perhaps he knew how to grow a new one. Those Yankees could do almost anything.

Carey's attention was distracted from the play. An acute pain began to bore through his eye. He bungled execrably. Blackbeard assumed a haughty swagger. He felt himself already victorious.

The room swam dizzily about Festus. Hate surrounded him like a palpable vapor, oppressive, stifling. The balls that spun and clicked on the green cloth seemed metamorphosed into rolling eyes.

He trod on Señor Valverde's toe: the señor was the best pistol-shot in Santiago. He poked the butt of his cue into Colonel Vicenza's solar plexus: the colonel wielded the most facile blade in Chili. Both received

his apologies with a stiffness that bespoke cards and seconds and a morning tête-a-tête in the suburbs.

Utter desperation restored his courage and coolness.

"If I've got to lose, at any rate I'll lose like a man."

He began playing as he had never played in his life before, fighting uphill. Out of Juan's hostile eyes looked Carmen, inspiring him. He pressed his enemy hard.

Blackbeard lost his cocksure swagger; his play fell off. Now and then a wild stroke proved costly. He began gnawing his lips.

Both were in a trap from which only one could escape.

At last came the crisis. Don Ramon had left the balls in an extremely difficult position. Unless Carey could make the next shot, the game was lost.

Never had Festus achieved such a shot. He did not dream he could make it now. But on it hung the game,—his right eye,—Carmen!

Don Ramon, confident of triumph, was tapping out an insolent tattoo with his cue upon the floor. José Carafa hugged himself with a Satanic grin. For him the game was proving a cat's paw to pull his chestnuts from the fire. The human wall about the table stared, breathless, open-mouthed.

Carey pulled himself together. His heart was pounding hard, but his muscles were taut, his nerves like steel.

Like a rattlesnake striking, his cue darted forward.

Click!

The game was over. He had saved his right eye, and won his opponent's.

Bueno! Ah-h-h-h! Bueno! Wonderful! A buzz of unwilling admiration rose. This time it was sincere.

Weak and shaking, Carey straightened and threw back his shoulders. He might be riddled in a dozen duels, but he would never be ridiculous in the sight of Carmen.

The room hushed. Outside "Dulce Patria" pealed unnoticed. Everybody was waiting to see what would happen next.

Don Ramon's tallow face twitched. His fingers writhed round his cue. He drew his hand hastily across his forehead, knocking off his glasses. His panic, as he stooped to recover them, would have been laughable, had it not displayed such abject fear. Carey looked at him with pitying contempt. And this was the swashbuckler who had counted all things light as compared with honor!

Don Carlos Sanchez, the referee, stepped forward, breaking the painful silence.

"Señor," he said to Festus, "you have won."

"Let him keep his eye," returned Carey. "I have beaten him fairly. That is enough."

Don Ramon drew a breath of relief, but the secretary shrugged his shoulders.

"Permit me to remind you, Señor, that your part, as one of the contestants, is over; mine, as judge, is just begun."

Festus looked his surprise. Don Ramon's jaw dropped.

"There were three parties to this wager: the two contestants, and the referee, representing the Pacific Club. It is an inflexible law that any agreement made within our walls must be

carried out to the letter. That law has never been broken. It never will be broken, so long as I am secretary. The loser must pay the forfeit."

"But, man dear, I do not want his eye," remonstrated Carey.

"That is purely immaterial. You have no choice in the case. Neither have I. The right eye of the loser was to be *removed* and presented to the victor. Whether or not you care to accept it is another matter with which I have nothing to do. The agreement stands unalterable. Otherwise the game was a farce. The Pacific Club does not encourage vaudeville."

Realizing the futility of further objection, Carey became silent. Don Ramon glanced hopelessly this way and that, like a trapped rat, seeking escape. The stern old Chilian eyed his shrinking compatriot with disgust.

"It is unfortunate, regrettable; but the señor should not have proposed the wager, had he been unwilling to abide the issue. Is the Señor Doctor Riesco present?"

A short, bald man in the second row pushed himself to the front.

"Have you your case of instruments?"

The surgeon nodded. The secretary glanced toward Don Ramon.

"We are ready, señor. It is useless to delay."

Like a condemned felon, Blackbeard followed Don Carlos and the doctor into the cloak-room. The door closed.

A deeper silence settled over the club. Festus was the target of malevolent glances. That he had declined to accept his opponent's eye apparently made little difference in the feeling toward him, at least, outwardly.

Behind the closed door voices sounded; at first low, then high, excited, angry. There was a scuffle. Then the outer door slammed and feet ran down the steps.

In rushed Don Carlos, followed by the doctor. The secretary's white moustaches bristled; his eyes blazed; his face was apoplectic.

"Astounding! Incredible!" he burst forth. "He has fled, the dastard, the hound! But before he went,—"

He hissed a few choking words. There was a moment of stupefied silence. Then exclamations of wrath filled the room.

Don Carlos recovered his self-control.

"Señor, I have the honor."

Ceremoniously he offered Carey a folded handkerchief.

"I said I did not care for it," declined Festus.

"Then," said Doctor Riesco, "I will claim it as my fee."

Taking the parcel from the secretary, he slipped it into his pocket. Again Don Carlos spoke.

"The Señor Carey is a gallant man. The events of the evening may have led him to question the honor of the Pacific Club. If so, I am sure he will find its members ready to give him satisfaction."

An approving murmur greeted these words.

"I am perfectly satisfied," said Festus. "I do not doubt the honor of the club."

Once more the secretary spoke.

"Henceforth, so long as the señor abides among us, he is to continue to enjoy our privileges. Chilians respect

brave men, even though they may be foes."

Thunders of applause filled the room. The members swarmed round Festus. They fought for the honor of shaking his hand. Instead of challenges to duels, they overwhelmed him with invitations to drink. He had become at a single bound the most popular man in Santiago. Don José Carafa, with tears in his eyes, plighted eternal friendship. It made Carey's head swim. And when they broke up at an early hour the next morning, the entire club constituted itself his guard of honor, and escorted him to Hotel de Francia to the mingled strains of "Dulce Patria" and "Yankee Doodle."

Festus still sells stocks and bonds in Santiago. The dentist replaced his broken tooth with a gold one. At his marriage with Carmen, José Carafa was best man. And everybody was happy save Don Ramon de Volturo, somewhere in the outer darkness, sulking over the loss of his glass eye.

Which Was It?

BY J. M. CROFTON

IGHT agent Cooper gave the knob a final twirl, flung open the heavy outer door of the safe, and from a bunch of jingling keys, selected a queer looking new one and unlocked the inner door.

"All ready, Ferg." He picked up the through safe waybills in readiness to check off the sealed money packages and other valuables as Messenger Fergason handed them out. One by one, that alert young man called them off, the night agent checking, verifying and receipting for them till the last one was handed over to be stowed away in his money bag.

"One more, Ferg, package of bills for the Second National Bank at York."

"That's all there is here," Fergason's startled eyes met the agent's and the color left his face. "It's happened again!" he exclaimed huskily.

"Nonsense, we've overlooked it, that's all." Cooper was outwardly calm, as he dumped the contents of his money bag onto the car floor and hurriedly ran through the sealed packages, but, over and over his weary brain was repeating: "*Again—again—again;*"—the missing package was not in the bag.

"You must have put it into the local safe by mistake, when you checked in at Chicago." The night agent's voice became sharp and it steadied the breaking nerves of Fergason, though a sickening premonition warned him that they would not find the package of bills.

The contents of the local safe was thoroughly examined; nothing was found there but regular stuff.

After checking out the dazed Fergason, the big night agent sought the privacy of the bare, dingy express office north of the station, where route agent Bettit was waiting for a final chat before turning in.

"You've heard the whole of it now, Steve, the little Chinese puzzle that is breaking the nerves of all the messengers and demoralizing the entire force." The big night agent leaned wearily back in his chair. "It sounds incredible, I know. How the fellow got into the safe is more than I can figure out. There wasn't a mark of violence on it, yet—it had been opened. And not a soul in the world knew the combination except the agent in Chicago and myself."

"How many sealed packages have been taken altogether?" questioned the sympathetic listener.

"Five, with the one tonight. One—and the most valuable one—each time, and always from the midnight train, too. It looks as though the thief had inside information. It all began about four weeks ago. And, altogether, some fifty thousand dollars have been taken."

"And you mean to say you haven't found a trace of the thief yet?"

"Not a single clue even. And, mind you, Steve, there wasn't a mark of any kind on the safe—not a mark. I went over it with a glass and couldn't find a thing, not a scratch—not even a finger print." The night agent laughed mirthlessly. "We've had several detectives here, and the best of them have had to give it up. There is absolutely nothing to work on."

"The messengers?" queried Bettit briefly.

"No! that is another extraordinary feature of the case. A different messenger has been on the run every time. We laid the first two off but, when it happened again and again, we concluded the messengers were not mixed up in the matter." Cooper reached for his worn briar pipe and proceeded to fill and light it. After a puff or two, he continued: "Another thing—none of the messengers remember anything after the train left Ashland—till the Lincoln yards were reached."

"Um, so!" commented Bettit thoughtfully; "guess I'll stay over and give you some help; I haven't anything important on hand just now."

"Jove, Steve, I was hoping you would." Cooper's relief was evident. "If there isn't a let-up on this thing very soon, why, I'll be hunting another job. If there is anything you want, just ask for it, that's all."

"Bad as that, eh? Headquarters getting miffed?" Bettit was sleepy, still, he might as well get started. "Suppose you let me look over copies of the waybills for the past four or five weeks, before I turn in."

Next day, the route agent was not in evidence around the office. He had just come in and was looking over the day's waybills, when the night force went on duty. Strolling over to the night agent's cluttered desk, he asked: "Can you manage some way of concealing me in the express car of the midnight train tonight, before they leave Omaha?"

"Guess so;" the busy night agent glanced up at the placid, well-groomed route agent. "We can go up on the six o'clock train, if we hurry. Why tonight, though?"

"Oh, I have a hunch that there will be something doing—and then, I want to observe how things move along in the car. Can you leave at this time?"

"Sure. Want any help?" Cooper asked, as they made a run for the train which was just pulling out.

"No, it is better not to have too many around. It's a one man job, and I can handle him all right."

The express was light that night at Ashland, the only stop between Omaha and Lincoln, only a long, ominous looking box being loaded into the car. After the train pulled out, Bettit craned his neck slightly to see over the trunks behind which he was concealed; the messenger was busy at his desk. What was that strange odor? Bettit sniffed the air perplexedly. The train was rattling over the switches in the Lincoln yards. "Um, that's queer!" the route agent commented with sleepy, half-absent interest, "deuced queer."

"How much this time?" queried a low voice, as the scowling night agent finished checking the contents of the through safe. The nattily dressed route agent was standing at his side and looking on with twinkling eyes that lost no detail.

"How in *Sam Hill*, did you know there was anything missing?" growled Cooper, snapping shut his money bag and slipping the strap over his shoulder. "Did you see anything suspicious?"

"No, I didn't *see* a thing wrong—just guessed it, that's all." The route agent yawned slightly. "I went to sleep on the job, you know."

Cooper looked at him in amazement. "Well, by Jove, you seem to take it rather cool—and one thousand dollars missing, too. Went to sleep on the job;" his annoyance was evident.

"Oh, well, I know how it was done." Bettit climbed from the car and followed the big night agent down the platform.

"You've got to the bottom of this thing already?" the night agent asked eagerly, as he put the contents of his bag into the large safe in the depot office and motioned Bettit to a chair beside the shabby desk.

"N-o, not quite to the bottom. But I've learned beyond a question of doubt how the thing is worked; and I am pretty sure who the thief is."

"But—but, you said you went to sleep."

Bettit chuckled: "Yes, that's just it. I got my clue tonight—when I went to sleep. I'll get the thief next time."

"But are sure of that? Who is he?" demanded Cooper soberly.

"So sure that I'm looking forward with keen anticipation to his next attempt, which I am certain will be within a day or two." Bettit ignored the last question.

"I don't understand at all. But, if you say it's all right, why, I'll trust you to make good." The night agent lounged back in his chair and puffed thoughtfully at his pipe.

"I've had enough excitement for one night; I'm going to turn in." Bettit made haste to escape before he could be questioned further.

Settling himself as comfortably as his cramped quarters in the rear of the express car on the midnight train, would permit, the route agent prepared to wait—for what, he was not quite sure.

There was a large amount of express put on at Ashland and when the last—a heavy, oblong box—was lifted into the car, the door was closed and the messenger—Fergason—began checking up the stuff as the train pulled out of the yards.

Bettit, with a handkerchief containing a small piece of specially prepared gauze, held tightly over his mouth and nose, cautiously surveyed the car as the train raced on in the darkness. Fergason was still busy at his desk—suddenly, his head fell forward on his arms—he slept. The route agent could see nothing else out of the way, but, he waited patiently, his glance traveling swiftly around the car. A tiny creak, as of an unoiled hinge, attracted his attention; his gaze became focused on the long pine box resting just beside the safe—the side was slowly falling to the floor—a leg extended, then an arm—the corpse was creeping out of his cramped quarters, tall and thin and dark—a lively corpse at any rate, the route agent decided.

After a penetrating glance around the car, the intruder drew from his coat pocket a small telephone-like

head piece and slipped it over his head. Slender silk-covered wires connected the ear pieces to a tiny flat telephone transmitter and slender flexible wires ran from this down into his coat pocket. He placed the tiny transmitter close to the combination lock of the safe and with gloved fingers, slowly turned the combination. Suddenly he gave the bolts a twist and the heavy safe door swung open.

Replacing his peculiar instruments in his coat pocket, he brought forth a small key and locked the inner door. With practiced fingers he ran swiftly through the sealed packages, selected one, and,—his body became tense,—a feeling of being watched came over him. The messenger was still unconscious. He thrust the package into an inner pocket, hesitated for an instant, then glanced swiftly over his shoulder, down the long car, straight into two piercing eyes. In a second, the inner door of the safe was locked and he swung the heavy outer door shut, twirled the knob and rose.

"Well, you're a queer one." In spite of himself, a slow smile spread over the route agent's face. "Rather clever, I must say." Climbing from his hiding place behind the big boxed desk, Bettit cautiously advanced toward the thief, whose dark, sinister face betrayed nothing he might be thinking as to the failure of his well-laid plans. Suddenly, the route agent paused in his advance down the car—too late he realized his over-confidence in thinking he could take this man by surprise —something moist struck him in the face—then, oblivion.

Night agent Cooper was alone in the dark and gloomy office; he had reported the mysterious facts to headquarters at Omaha and was awaiting instructions, and still he pondered the queer happenings of the night. The midnight train had arrived with messenger Fergason unconscious, and he had been hurried to the hospital; route agent Bettit was missing from the car; a handkerchief containing a small piece of peculiar smelling gauze, found lying on the car floor behind the boxed desk, proved to be his, and —another sealed package of bills was gone from the locked safe.

Finally, tired out, the night agent drowsed over his desk, his pipe out; suddenly he started up, wide awake. What was that noise? Strange, it sounded like—oh, pshaw, imagination of course—still— He filled his pipe again and, with match lifted, paused. The same sound came again—a stiffled moan, long-drawn out.

"Nerves seem to be getting the better of me at last," Cooper grumbled, and with trembling fingers lighted his pipe and tried to look unconcerned; in vain. He glanced furtively over his shoulder through the glass partition, into the shadows at the farther end of the freight room; he twisted uneasily in his chair; then jumped to his feet, as the sound came again—louder this time. Straight to a long pine box resting near the outer door of the freight room, his unwilling feet carried him; then he paused, uncertain what to do, and feeling rather foolish if the truth must be told. A feeble groan stirred him to action—someone was in that box, and—alive too. Hunting frantically for an elusive hatchet, and finding it at last, he pried

up the top board of the long box. There, staring up at him, was—the missing route agent.

"There!" exclaimed Bettit, "that's better!"

The night agent's look of horror changed to one of amusement. "Perhaps you will tell me, Steve, since when you have started traveling round in a pine box?" he asked, helping the disheveled route agent to his feet.

Bettit did not answer, but calmly proceeded with the examination of his late prison. It was the regular pine box used in shipping caskets, but with this difference; the sides and top were hinged, with bolts opposite the hinges at one end of the box, firmly fastening it together, making it an easy matter to unlock the box from the inside and the occupant could get out from the sides, top or bottom of the box as the emergency arose—if one knew how. The interior was padded thickly with blankets. Several large knot holes admitted air.

"Some traveling case, that." Bettit commented briefly, as he finished his examination.

"How did you ever get into that box, and—"

"Never mind the story just now," interrupted the route agent, "I'll tell you all about it later; we've got other work cut out for us. Has Chief of Police Nalone been here tonight? He said he'd be down." Bettit's curtness forbade further questioning. "Ah, here he is now."

The door opened and in strode the energetic Chief of Police. "Hope I've not kept you waiting long." Chief Nalone spoke crisply, as one to whom time is money. "Had a breakdown; that's what made me so late."

Bettit and the Chief conferred together for a few minutes, then the Chief went out to his car.

"I say—what's up?" Cooper wanted to know.

"Come on, Cooper; you'll soon know. We've got to hustle now."

They lost no time in traversing the few blocks to their destination; the Chief's powerful car cut the corners with wanton recklessness and they finally halted in front of a two-story brick building on South Eleventh Street; descending, they crossed the walk and entered a gloomy, forbidding reception room.

"Mr. Farley in?" The Chief's searching glance was directed at an attendant, who came sleepily forward at the opening of the door.

"He has been gone about half an hour." The drowsy attendant yawned as he answered. "Anything I can do for you?" Then, for the first time, he noticed that it was the Chief of Police who questioned and his drowsiness left him instantly.

"Just missed him, eh?—too bad." Nothing escaped the Chief's alert eyes and he noticed an expression of uneasiness flit over the attendant's face. "Any idea where we can find him?"

"N-o-o, he did not say where he was going,—but I noticed that he had a bag with him when he got into his car."

"Skipped, by Jove!" exclaimed Bettit disgustedly.

"Guess we had better look around a bit, anyway," came crisply from the Chief as he brushed by the bewildered attendant and entered the inner office.

The three of them proceeded to

ransack the office, in spite of the protests of the man in charge, who stood around helplessly, in every one's way, —and found nothing. It was Bettit's quick eye that located a small old-fashioned safe in one corner, behind the book shelves. The door stood open and the Chief's practiced fingers soon ran through the contents of the safe.

"Ah! here's something." Nalone had pulled out the small money drawer and, hidden behind it, had found another smaller drawer. There, folded neatly together, were the missing express envelopes, but the seals and thread were broken and the contents gone. "It's queer, what one will do. Now you'd think Farley would have destroyed these envelopes, but no; he hides them carefully in this secret drawer for us to find." The shrug of the shoulders that accompanied Nalone's remark was evidence of his complete disgust.

"Suppose we take a look around this display room," called Bettit, who had gone into the large room at the rear of the office. The attendant turned on the lights and they could see that there was on display the latest and best of the undertaker's art. Silk, velvet, and metallic couches and caskets of all shades to suit the most exacting taste; but the Chief and Cooper displayed no liking for the job and watched the route agent as he examined the exhibits.

"Oh, come on," growled the Chief. "What are you looking for here, anyway? Expect to find Farley concealed in his own show room?"

The sarcasm was lost on Bettit and he answered seriously: "I don't know what I'm looking for, but I'm afraid I'll find something I don't want to."

Bettit opened a door at the top of a flight of dark steps. "What is down here?" he demanded of the attendant, who had followed their every move.

"Just a stock room in front where we keep our extra supplies, and the heating plant in the rear basement," answered the man shortly, as he pressed a button, lighting the basement; he was becoming a bit worried as to the outcome of this mysterious raid.

Cooper and Nalone jumped, as a sound of rending wood came to their ears—an undertaking establishment just before dawn is not the most soothing thing for one's nerves.

There was a sharp exclamation from Bettit, who had disappeared behind a tier of long pine boxes: "Come here quick, both of you!"

They found Bettit kneeling beside a casket, the cover broken where he had wrenched it off with a hatchet; and there—with his head resting upon the satin pillow, was—

"Farley!" breathed the startled Chief of Police; he turned to the white-faced attendant. "I thought you told us that Farley left the building before we came?"

"He—he—did—I saw—him go out the door and get into his car—how—how did he get in there?" The man shrieked and covered his face with his shaking hands, shrinking away from the sight in the casket.

Cooper and the Chief closely examined the face there before them. "I don't believe that's Farley at all," Nalone said finally. "It looks like him and yet—" He stopped abruptly and turned to the route agent still

kneeling there beside the body. "What do you think?"

"W-e-l-l, he looks like the man I saw rob the safe tonight. But, you can all see that this man," Bettit looked at the dead man before them, "has been dead and embalmed for some time, about four or five weeks, I should think," and he glanced interrogatively at the attendant.

"About—that," the man declared. "But, I can't understand it at all."

Leaving the Chief—astounded at the result of their search—in charge till an officer came, Cooper and Bettit rode back in the early morning to the depot office of the Express Company.

"Now, Steve, I've waited long enough; I want to know how you did it." Cooper glanced at the route agent sitting beside him in the car.

"It wasn't much of a job," laughed the route agent. "I hope you will have something harder for me to solve the next time I happen in. You had the clue to it all, right in your hands all the time and never saw it."

"I had the—that's the most astonishing thing I ever—" The big night agent stopped helplessly.

"Yes, you—those waybills. They showed altogether too many caskets going down to the Farley Undertaking Establishment branch at Ashland, and each time a casket was shipped down there, the Ashland branch had a corpse to send to Lincoln, and on the *midnight train.*" Bettit paused thoughtfully, then continued:

"Then I scouted around a bit; found out that Mr. Farley had fired his entire force of assistants some four or five weeks ago, and had an entirely new force now. That was a queer thing to do, so I hunted up one of the young men who had previously worked for Mr. Farley—name of Morgan.

"Morgan told me of a quarrel Mr. Farley had had late one night with an unknown visitor. No one else saw the visitor arrive, and—*no one* saw him depart. Morgan happened to be in the reception room when the visitor arrived. The man had his coat collar turned up and hat pulled down over his face, and all Morgan could say was that the man was tall and slender. Rather thought the man must have been a relative of some sort, from a word he heard now and then, when their voices were raised. Well, the next day—the entire force of assistants were fired."

"But, how about the messengers—"

"New anæsthetic, used by the Apaches of Paris; a mere whiff of it is enough to make one unconscious for an hour. He caught me unprepared the first time, but the next time, well—he got me then, too." Bettit chuckled reminiscently. "Opening the safe was easy—just used a little instrument somewhat like the telephone girls use at the switchboard."

"Well, that get's me—looks easy too—after you've explained it all. I wonder which was Farley—the man who got away with the express money, or the one we found dead?"

"I don't know," acknowledged the route agent, "but I'm going to find out."

Bill

BY HORATIO WINSLOW

AND now, father, get ready to hear some good news. In spite of the letters I've been writing I have not been feeling half as chipper as I let on, and yesterday it seemed to me I had just about reached the end of my string. I wanted to lie down and quit.

"You see, I had answered a 'help-wanted' ad that took me clear down to the Battery, only to find the job taken hours before I got there. As I had walked all the way to save car-fare, you can believe I was tired and discouraged when I wandered over into the little Battery park and sat down. Well, while I was looking at the harbor, all of a sudden another fellow walked over and sat down beside me.

"It wasn't any time at all before we got to talking and I found out his name was Bill. 'Just Bill,' he said. 'Plain Bill sounds right to me.'

"Of course I told him about you and the farm, and how I'd been raised and the more I talked, the more interested he got.

"Finally he said, 'Say, Kid, it's lucky we met up together like this because I'm working for the Strangers' Aid Society.'

"When I asked him what that was, he looked surprised.

"'Didn't you ever hear of the Strangers' Aid Society? Why, it's a big organization here in New York City, that was got up to find jobs for strangers. I'm one of the agents that's sent around to pick out responsible people who want to settle in the city and find jobs for them.'

"It seemed so providential that I could hardly believe it.

"'Do you think you can find me a job?" I asked him.

"He looked me over and said, 'Are you willing to take any kind of a job?'

"I told him yes.

"'How about being a night-watchman?'

"At first the idea sort of took my breath away because I hadn't come to New York for anything like that, but I remembered what you'd always told me about any kind of a living being better than no kind, so I put my fingers on the last fifteen cents I had left and nodded my head.

"'Got any references?' he asked next.

"So I showed him the letter from the Reverend Abrams, and the one Professor Saunderson wrote when I had to quit High School and the two from Mr. Buckley. I could see they made a favorable impression on Bill.

"'Fair enough,' he said, after reading them. 'And how about your nerve?'

"I told him that was all right and let him feel my arm so he could see for himself the kind of muscle I had.

"'Well,' Bill said, 'here's the proposition. Nobody knows about this job

because the fellow just quit this morning. A big warehouse down on the river has got to have a new night-watchman. They'd rather have a man of their own than one of these agency watchmen.'

"'I see,' I interrupted, 'and they've asked the Strangers' Aid Society to find a man for them?'

"He shook his head. 'No, that isn't it. The superintendent doesn't believe much in the Strangers' Aid Society; that's why we're so anxious to find somebody that will make good. Afterwards, you see, we can explain to him that we discovered his faithful employee, and that way it will be a big thing for us. So, if you get the job, don't say a word about the society till you've made good. See?'

"We started up-town, Bill paying both fares. Bill hasn't much money because the Strangers' Aid Society doesn't pay big salaries, but he knew I had less than he did. All the way he told such funny stories that, long before we reached the place, I felt as though I'd known Bill all my life.

"When we got to the warehouse Bill let me go in alone to meet Mr. Accord, the superintendent. At first Mr. Accord seemed suspicious when I asked him for the job and wanted to find out how I knew the position was open. It seems their last watchman had been attacked by somebody the night before and had quit his job, being afraid to go back. Of course I could not tell Mr. Accord how I had found out that the job was open, but I showed him the letters and talked with him till he gave me the job.

"I go on duty tonight. Say, I'm happy!

"Bill was waiting for me outside the warehouse and took me to his rooming-house and we had a supper of crackers and cheese. He is the finest fellow I ever met and my best friend. I would do anything to help him out and I told him so. He says that all he asks me to do is 'the right thing.' And I certainly will do the right thing on Bill's account as much as my own.

"The reason why they need a watchman at the warehouse is not money but silk. Sometimes they get big consignments worth more than a dollar a yard and Mr. Accord said anybody breaking in could run away with a thousand yards of it easy enough.

"'Keep everybody out,' Mr. Accord said, when he gave me his last instructions, and I certainly will."

LATER

"Father, I've just had a very funny experience. It is midnight and the end of my first six hours on the job. I've bolted my lunch in order to finish this letter and tell you of my first amusing adventure as a night watchman.

"At first nothing happened and I was just beginning to feel at home in the place when I heard somebody tap at the door that fronts on the street.

"I opened it a crack and there stood Bill.

"'Hello,' Bill said, 'open up.'

"I shook my head. 'Can't. Orders are not to let anybody in.'

"'Aw,' he said, 'I don't count. A Strangers' Aid Man can go anywhere.'

"Of course I saw right off what Bill was driving at: he wanted to find

out if I was doing my duty or if I was easy enough to be imposed on. I stiffened up.

"'You can't come in here,' I said, 'it's against the rules.' All the time I was laughing up my sleeve to think I'd seen through his little joke.

"He pretended to get very angry. 'Come on,' he said, 'do the right thing. Cut out the funny stuff.'

"I was about to explain that I was doing the right thing, when who should come along but a big policeman. As he started across the street toward us, Bill jumped away as though he were afraid of him, at the same time scowling at me.

"It was all so comical, for, of course, underneath his scowl he was really laughing and I almost burst out laughing myself. Tomorrow I will go where he lives and jolly him good because I was too smart for him.

"After Bill left I had a talk with the policeman, who warned me to be careful of toughs who might slip into the water and then climb up the piles onto the end of the wharf. But I am not afraid.

"Must close now, father, and begin watching my property once more. Bill told me to do the 'right thing' and that is just what I am going to do."

(*From the Dead Letter Office*)

"Bill, I am writing this not only because I have good news for you, but I want to know what has happened to you.

"Every day for the past two weeks I have gone down to your rooming-house and each time Mrs. Burke has told me that she has not seen you. Also, she says she has never heard of the Strangers' Aid Society and so cannot give me the address. That is why I am sending this letter simply in care of the Society, hoping that the post-office may be able to supply street and number.

"Last night when I dropped in before going on the job, I found Mrs. Burke was going to sell your stuff to pay your room-rent; but I knew you would not like this so I paid her six dollars and took your clothes and satchel over to my room where you can get them when you come back, which I hope will be soon.

"But now listen to the good news.

"The last time I saw you, that first night when you tested me to see if I was honest, I began to figure out something you said. You remember you told me you expected me to 'do the right thing.'

"Well, I thought, am I doing the right thing by writing to my father while I am supposed to be on guard as a night-watchman? I decided I wasn't. So, finishing the letter hurriedly, I began to patrol the warehouse as though a bunch of pirates were getting ready to kidnap me. (Ha! ha!)

"It was after twelve. Passing into the moonlight from the shadow of the warehouse—I could not have been more than six feet from the edge of the wharf—when all of a sudden, for no reason at all, I ducked to one side. As I twisted my head, a big piece of iron flew past my right ear, hitting me a little on the shoulder. If it had struck my head it would have caved in my skull. As it was, it knocked me halfway around and down on my hands and knees.

VOLUME TIGHTLY BOUND

"For about a hundredth of a minute I couldn't figure what had happened, but as I struggled to get on my feet, I saw somebody leaving the shadow with a revolver held by the wrong end. I suppose he was going to finish the job.

"If I had been as wise then as I am now, I would have pulled my gun right away and shot at him, but I didn't want to hurt him so all I did was to peg my club in his direction. It must have caught him in the face because he spluttered and turning his revolver began to fire.

"Why I was not killed I don't know, because he banged away three times before I drew my gun and once after. One bullet went through my coat-shoulder, drawing blood, and another cut my cheek so that for three days I had to wear a bandage around my head.

"But I was the better shot. I fired only once and that was enough. He pulled the trigger again, dropped his gun and went whirling and staggering around as though he had been punched in the wind.

"All at once I felt sorry for him and tried to catch him before he fell.

"But I was not quick enough. He wobbled back, tripped, and fell down fifteen feet into the black water. I yelled for help but of course nobody came because the place was locked. I was going to dive over myself and try to get him, but I was glad I didn't because, while I was standing there, I became faint and pretty nearly fell over the side myself.

"A little later a whole crowd of watchmen and cops and other night workers were shaking me by the hand and offering to buy me drinks and telling me I was a hero.

"So you see, Bill, I have made good, though I am more sorry than anybody knows to think I had to make good by shooting a fellow man. Well, he tried to kill me and got it himself; that's all there is to it.

"But, anyhow, you don't have to worry about this; here's what I want you to think about, Bill: There is a big chance here for men who are reliable and are willing to start at the bottom and work up. Next week, Mr. Accord, who thinks I am all right, is going to give me a chance in the office. When I told him I had one of the finest fellows in New York for a friend, he said he would be willing to try you out at my old place.

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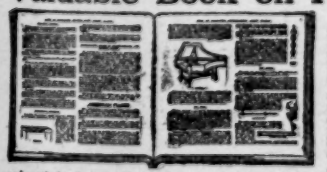

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